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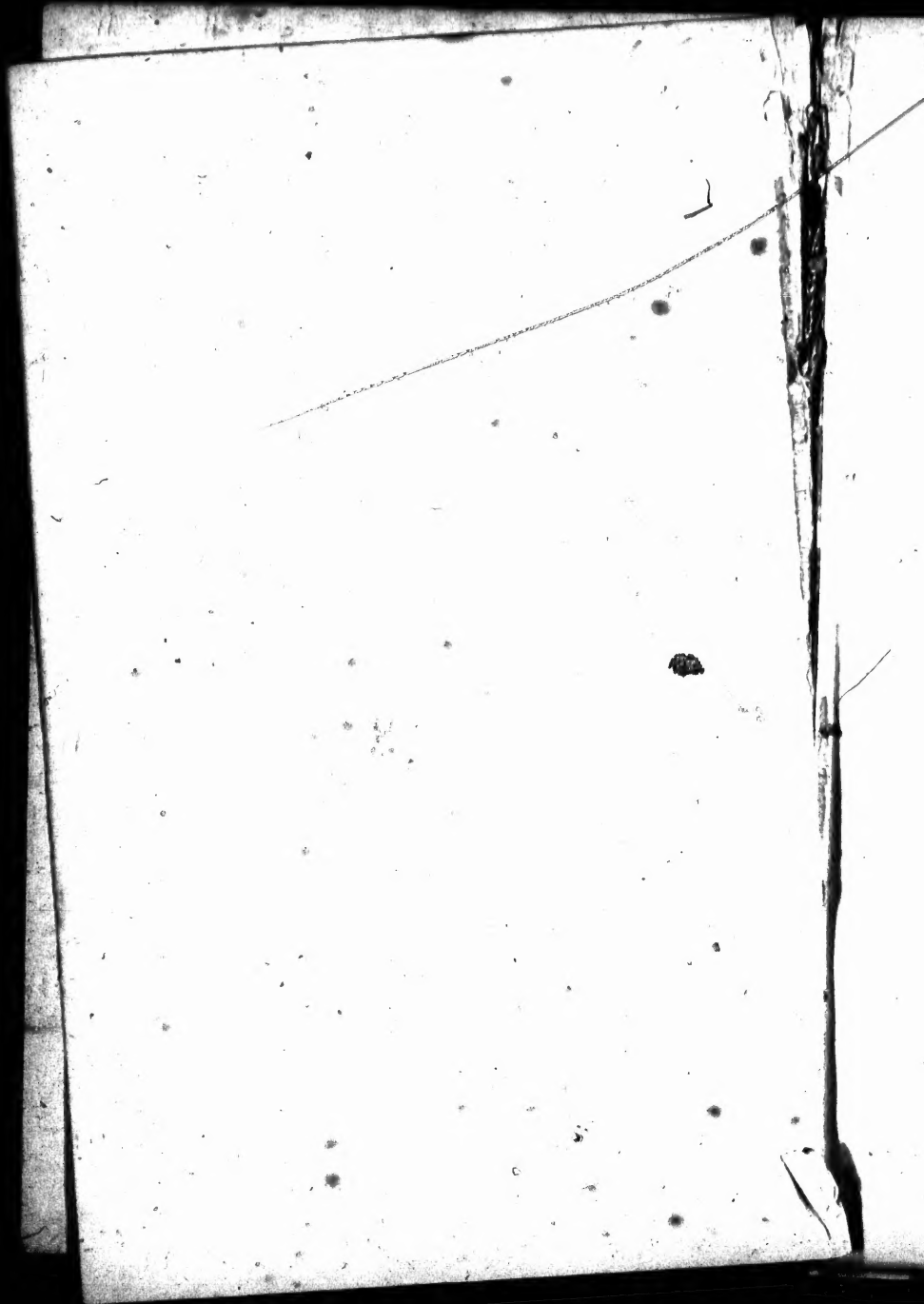
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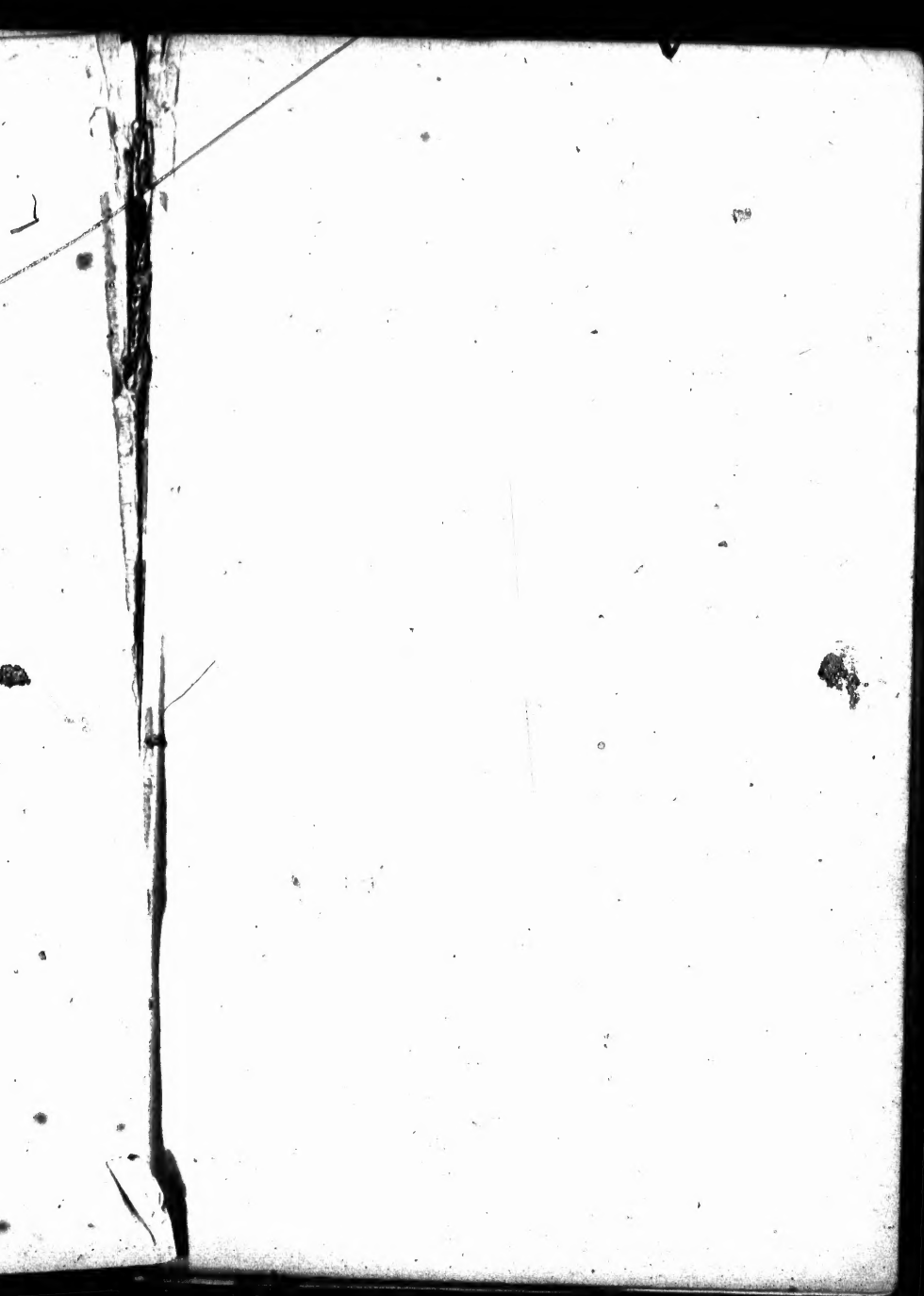
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FOUND AFLOAT.

Frontispiece.

FOUND AFLOAT.

AND OTHER TALES.

BY

MRS. GEORGE CUPPLES.



Toronto:

S. R. BRIGGS,

TORONTO WILLARD TRACT DEPOSITORY,

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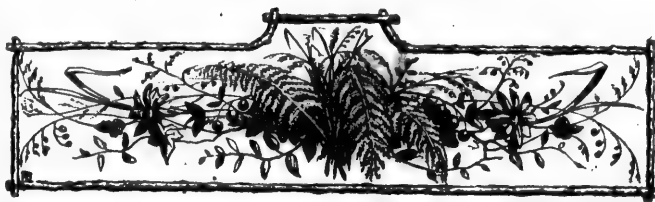
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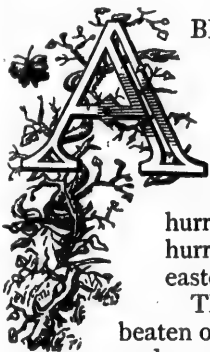
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FOUND AFLOAT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE LITTLE CAPTAIN,' 'MISS MATTY,'
ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.



BLACK afternoon, mate ; we'll be having doings afore morning, I reckon.'

'Ay, ay, ye're right there, youngster. It's not often that I've seen such heavy clouds, or heard such a growl aloft, no, not even roundin' the "Horn ;" and I've seen a deal o' hurricanes, boy—a deal o' squalls and hurricanes ; but never a stronger sou'easter as this 'ere is agoing to be.'

These words were spoken by two weather-beaten old seamen, as they crouched for shelter under a projecting part of the cliff. A stranger would scarcely have observed any difference in their faces, for both looked old and strongly marked by exposure to the elements ; but nothing would have given old Ned Gaskin greater offence, than to be considered as young as his present companion, Jack Sprott. Ned, on consideration of his four years' seniority, lorded it over poor Jack in great style. He was a mere boy, was Jack, in Ned's estimation, for he had only been in the 'sarvice' a paltry period of ten years, while Ned had drawn his pay as an able seaman before he was eighteen. And it

the matter was discussed at the little village alehouse, and the point pushed very far, wasn't Ned ready to show his fourteen wounds, bullet shots and sabre cuts, and the last ugly gash across his chest, from the exploding of a shell at the bombardment of Canton, which said wound had gained him his pension and his present position in the coast-guard?

But though he was determined to keep his hard-earned position, as the most experienced seaman on that station, and, indeed, on any of the neighbouring stations for miles round, and though he was very gruff in his manner, he had the softest heart imaginable; his good wife, Dolly, had not a kindlier feeling towards her fellow-creatures—and everybody knew what a soft heart Dolly had. If he was particular about his position as an A B, he was even more so about being thought a grim, determined, disagreeable old salt. Why he wanted the world to think so hardly of him was a mystery, especially to his wife, who knew better than any one all about the gentleness that was hidden away under that rough exterior. But the world, which, so far as Ned was concerned, was represented by the little village of Hurst-cliff Bay, humoured him in his notion. Even the boys made believe to step off the side-path, as if afraid to come into contact with him; and thus old Ned was made happy. With grim satisfaction he would say, 'Now I don't believe them 'ere youngsters would lay hold of my jacket, no, not for a twenty pun' note,—they knows me, they do. Leave them small craft alone to find out the bearin's of a man. Why, they can do with Jack Sprott just as they please. Ah, but that 'ere Jack han't got no proper dignity about him noway. But we can't expect it, we can't, for Jack hain't been a bo'sun's-mate aboard a frigate like this 'ere Ned Gaskin.'

To see the two old veterans at present, they had forgotten every question in the greater one of looking out for ships which might have failed to reach a safe haven. Ned, with his glass held under his arm, peered eagerly

out across the dark expanse of waters, watching, with an experienced eye, the line of the horizon. For a long time they stood silently watching, their pea-jackets buttoned tight up to their throats, and their 'sou'westers' stuck hard and fast upon the back of their heads. At last, as if Jack could bear the roar of the dashing waves and the howling winds no longer—as if the mere sound of human voices were cheering, he said again, 'Ay, a black night; and what I'm afeard on, mate, a boat could hardly live in such a sea, if so be's a wreck should happen here-away.'

'Not live, boy!' replied his companion; 'ye surely don't mean to say the "Mermaid," as taut a craft as ye'll find on any station on this 'ere coast, couldn't brave them waters? If some o' them new hands that's been sent down had said them words, I'd hardly believe it; but Jack Sprott to say so, why, I can't take it in noways; them old ears mustn't have heard aright.'

'Awel, shipmate,' persisted Jack, 'no doubt ye've weathered many a gale, and you be experienced, I'm not going to deny that 'ere same; but them eyes can't deceive me; and I say, though the "Mermaid" is a taut trim boat, and surefooted, still she'd not be able to cross that bar. So I only hopes we'll see no lights at sea to-night.'

Scarcely had they stopped speaking, when the gleam of a rocket shot athwart the sky, and the dull boom of a distant gun was heard, though only experienced ears could distinguish the signal of distress. Ned and Jack hurried up the cliff and were soon at the station, where they found a crowd of men already gathered, preparing to launch the lifeboat, for they too had seen the signal. Again and again they heard the boom of the cannon, each time coming closer and closer in the direction of the rocks. Just as Ned reached the group of eager, anxious men, a consultation was being held upon the advisability of putting to sea at all, some giving it as their opinion, like Jack Sprott, that 'she'd never live,' 'that she'd never get over the bar,' and if so, 'she'd never get back again.'

thus being of no use to the sufferers, and only endangering their own lives, and ensuring the destruction of their trusty lifeboat.

Gruff, grim old Ned did not waste words however. Glancing critically round to see that everything was in readiness,—by no means losing sight of the evident satisfaction with which his presence was hailed,—he promptly climbed into the boat and adjusted the life-belt round his body; then, turning his glistening eye upon the crowd, he called out: ‘Let any man who is chicken-hearted stay at home with the women; we need men to-night. I’ll not deceive ye, lads, it’s a sharp venture this. You’ve the word of Ned Gaskin for’t, that a wilder night never blew, so them that stays ashore need not be ashamed; but it’ll never be said that old Ned stayed with *his* missus, and left helpless messmates, ay, and mayhap women, to perish.’ And having delivered himself of this pithy speech, Ned took hold of the steering oar; while the effect of it was soon apparent upon his audience, who tumbled in as it were in a body, in spite of the entreaties of the wailing women, who in vain attempted to prevent them. But again the harsh voice of Ned was heard ordering the youngsters out; for there were many volunteers independent of the proper boat’s crew; that none but oldsters were to go—men that had been in a gale before, and could keep their eyes open in spite of the blinding sea spray. Away they went, dashing into the darkness, twelve picked men, with Ned in his place as coxswain, and Jack Sprott at the stroke oar. Boring her way through surf and sand, onward she goes, each man bending at the oars with might and main, as only men rowing for life or death ever do; old Ned’s eagle eye piercing the heavy fog, and his voice ringing out clear as a bell, in warning, when the heavy seas come combing along, breaking across the bows, or half burying the ‘Mermaid’ and her precious burden under surf and spray. But she rights herself again like a good one; shaking the water from her, she dances along, now poised on the crest of an enormous wave, now down into

the trough, as if she were a living thing,—as if her crew had brought her there for nothing but sport. All the time a keen look-out was kept for the distressed vessel in the direction of 'the Crab' rock; for, before starting, they had discovered the fated ship was not far from the worst part of the coast. After watching as eagerly as they could, the next flash of lightning showed she had already struck, and the white seas were breaking over her every minute.

'I'm a-thinking, mates, we can't serve them nohow,' said an old sailor.

'Ay,' said another, 'I fear me, lads, she'll not hold out till we get to her; and she seemed to be a largish ship.'

For a few minutes there was a lull in the wind, the moon burst out from behind the dense clouds, and Ned, seizing the opportunity, adjusted his glass, and strained his eyes in the direction, while all waited breathlessly for the old man's opinion.

'Can any of you youngsters see aught like a mast here away on the starboard?' said Ned. 'If so be's, she's gone down already in deep water, mates.'

It was only too true. Right away from where they were, a mast, with drowning creatures clutching it, was dimly seen, but evidently sinking fast, as the wreck broke up, almost within hail of the men who were straining every nerve to save them. Three times did the boat get within a few yards of it, but only to be dashed back again by the huge waves that rolled in fury against the rocky coast; and the men reluctantly had to give up the struggle, though only after the mast had disappeared under the treacherous waters. When all hope of coming up to the wreck was gone, one of the men fancied he saw a white object floating in the water, clear of the scattered wreck, beyond the line of breakers.

'It's a body; I'm sure of that, mates,' cried Ned; 'and if we don't get hold of it quickly, it'll be swept away in the back-draft of the water. There may be life in't, who knows!' And in a moment he had passed a rope round

his waist, and, calling to the man next him to take his place, he prepared to spring overboard.

'Avast there, old shipmate,' cried one of the youngest of the men. 'If one must swim, let it be a suppler-jointed chap; we can't spare you,—you be of more value than any three on us.'

'Thankee, my lad,' said Ned huskily; but the next moment he was breasting the waves, striking out as vigorously as any of them could have done. It was well known that Ned was about the best swimmer aboard, and had been the means of saving lives before. Eagerly they watched for a gleam of moonlight, or a sudden flash of lightning, to show where he was. 'He's down,' cried one; 'ease the line there.' 'Not a bit of him; there he is, resting himself atop o' the wave,' said a second, admiringly; 'he's like a cask in the water, is old Ned.' 'There,' cried the first speaker, 'he's got hold on't now; pull, lads, with a will!'

They rowed as close to the breakers as they dared, and waited breathlessly for the signal to haul in upon the rope; but it came at last, and with a shout that sounded above the tempest, Ned and his burden was safely hauled in. The shore was lined with anxious men, waiting to see the boat come in. Some of the wives of the crew were on their knees praying for the safe return of those who were so dear to them; while here and there little children clung round their mothers' necks, and wept because they saw their mothers weeping, though they did not understand why they were doing so. A woman was passing between the different groups, unweariedly trying to cheer them,—soothing one, or quietly admonishing another whose grief was of the more noisy order. This was Dolly Gaskin, old Ned's wife, a placid, firm, plump matron, whose general healthy cheeks were now blanched white, and her eye tearless; yet she seemed the most composed of all, and the very men seemed to benefit by her presence.

'It's all very well for you to say "whisht," Dolly, you that

has ne'er a chick or a child ; but think what's to become o' me and my seven children if my poor man is drowned,' whined a woman who had been screaming and ringing her hands in a perfect agony of grief.

'Rachel Adams,' said Dolly, with trembling voice, 'my man Ned is as precious to me as your Tom is to you,—he is all I possess now. But, woman, ye must not forget that they've gone out to help to save perishing fellow-creatures, and surely the good Lord will protect them. Oh, Rachel, instead of wasting your breath screaming in that way, pray to Him to protect our men.'

But they came at last, those good brave hearts, and fifty pair of hands were ready to drag the boat up the sand, out of reach of the farthest wave ; and the white bundle, for such it appeared to be at first, tied on a sort of raft, was carefully carried out, and lanterns brought to bear upon it to discover what it really was. It was a child's cot, carefully enveloped in a piece of stiff canvas of a light colour, which had at once attracted the eye. When the covering was removed, there lay all they had brought to show as the result of their desperate errand,—all that was left of a gallant ship, evidently of heavy burden. A little child, a boy about three or four years of age, lay rubbing his eyes as if he had been asleep, and the light of the torches had just awakened him ; for he seemed to be quite comfortable, without scarcely a spot of water, owing to the careful way the raft had been made to float clear of the force of the spray. A profusion of bright curls half covered the face ; and now a pair of deep blue eyes looked up wonderingly at the strange group of faces gathered round, and the lips began to quiver as if afraid. All round the encircling group there went a shiver of strong emotion, which well-nigh brought tears to the eyes of some at the sight of a waif so unexpected from out of the very jaws of tempest, death, and shipwreck.

Everybody asked of one another what was to be done with the child ; and some, even of the women also, began

mentally to count up the number of mouths they had at home to feed, and shook their heads doubtfully. Dolly meanwhile had bent over the cot, and smoothed the curly head gently; and the child, after gazing long and earnestly into the kind face bending over him, suddenly held out his arms, and when Dolly had lifted him out, he laid his head down on her shoulder, and clutching her round the neck, seemed to think he had found a protector.

'I tell you what's to be done, mates. We'd better take him to the parson; he'll know how to get him sent on to the nearest work'us,' said one of the fishermen, just as the little arms had got themselves twisted round Dolly's neck, and the face hidden away amongst the folds of her snow-white neckerchief.

Some of the crew of the lifeboat had been carried home at once by their wives and friends; but Ned had stood by all the time, a good deal exhausted, it is true, but able to take an interest in the disposal of the child he had saved. 'No, lads, he's not the kind for a work'us,' he said with a gruffer voice than ordinary, for the sight of the child in his wife's arms had filled his honest grey eyes almost to overflowing. 'I tell you what it is,' he continued, making a vigorous effort to recover himself; 'I've been a-thinking that that 'ere youngster and his sleeping-cot belongs to me; and if so be's 'ere's no objection, mates, we'll just stow them away together in my cottage, and my missus shall look after them till such times as somebody turns up to claim him.'

Ned's speech was received even with a greater show of heartiness than usual, for, besides behaving so nobly, he had lifted a burden off all their minds together. The child was at once carried away to the little cottage on the shore, facing the sea, and placed between warm blankets in Dolly's own bed, where he lay quite still, watching that careful housewife bustling about preparing her husband's coffee. While she was doing so, Ned having changed his wet clothes, sat quietly smoking his

pipe in deep thought, when suddenly he looked up and said, 'Wife, I've been a-thinking this here child has mayhap been sent to us to cheer us in our old age, instead of the little lad we lost long ago.'

'No doubt, no doubt, Ned,' replied Dolly gravely. 'He's sent, not a doubt of it, just as our own little one was. But why d'ye say he was *lost*, instead of lent by the Lord? Oh, Ned, wilt ever learn to think as how our boy is only gone to the good country afore us, as the parson has said over and over again?'

Dolly was interrupted by Ned pointing to the bed; and turning round, there she saw the child perched up against the pillows, watching them with a wondering smile playing round his mouth.

'I declare if the little un aint a-staring at your grim figure-head, Dolly! Come, leave preaching to the parson, you'll be setting us into the dolefuls: give us our supper, missus. Ay, little chap, what do *you* say? Shall it be pipe all hands to supper?' said Ned, laughing.

The child, as if he perfectly understood what he was saying, held out his arms, and began to shout out most lustily, 'Ganpa, take Alf; me hungry, ganpa!'

'What can the youngster mean?' cried Ned in astonishment. 'If he aint a-thinking I'm his grandad, Dolly! And so I shall be, my booty: I'm at your sarvice till your own granpar turns up. So come along and we'll have our supper.'

After supper had been taken, the good couple sat and questioned the child as to his previous history; but nothing more could be drawn from him, except that his name was Alf or Alfie, that his mamma and papa were 'away way, ova a sea;' and the blue eyes filled with tears, and the voice quivered as he said, 'But ma will tum adain to Alfie.' The only other thing that could be extracted from him was, that he seemed to be afraid lest somebody—his nurse it may have been—should come in and take him away; and in the very middle of his apparent enjoyment he would look round towards the door, and shaking his



little fat fist at the imaginary person, he would cry out, 'Go way, Mab; Alf nō go bed,—tay ganpa!' To the astonishment of rough old Ned, little Alf went suddenly off to sleep in the very middle of the cross-questioning, with his hand stuck confidently into the breast of that veteran's waistcoat, which drew from him the remark to his wife Dolly: 'Well, if he aint a queer little chap! He's not a bit afeard o' me like them other youngsters. He's a true spirit in him, I see that, missus; and I likes him for it. I can't abear a coward.'

The next day, Dolly having a great respect for the judgment of the vicar, insisted upon her husband going to consult him about the child; but Ned thought such a step unnecessary, knowing well that Mr. Dartmor might form an opinion quite different from his own views. 'You see, old woman,' Ned had said, 'I'm afeard parson will maybe think the youngster ought to be given up to the work'us he's got to do with, just because I wants to keep him here. You'll not deny, missus, that parson is apt to be contrary sometimes. If he says, "Ned, my man, I sees clearly that this here child will have to be took to the poor officers," I'll have to go clean against his orders. He's a good man, is the vicar, and for head work he could take the wind out of the sharpest clipper in Baltimore; but this is a free country, and parson though he be, I'm not agoing to let him come athwart me in this matter.'

It turned out as Ned had supposed. Mr. Dartmor did find fault with the child being kept at Hurstcliff, and pooh-poohed the idea that Ned had formed of little Alf being a person of consequence, owing to the careful way he had been fastened in the cot. The vicar had no doubt he had been the only child aboard of the ill-fated vessel, and that on that account they had been more particular about him. But though Ned said nothing further on that subject, seeing Mr. Dartmor was suffering from the effects of gout, he had not convinced him. The interview ended in rather high words on both sides, for Ned firmly persisted in refusing to give Alf up. 'Why,

your reverence,' Ned had said, 'aint it just in my bit of a cottage that the first track of the boy must be looked for, when his friends come after him, as in course they must? The number of his mess can al'ays be found there, sir. But until such times, he goes to no work'us, begging your honour's pardon.' Whereupon, after this speech of Ned's, the vicar solemnly declared that he would take steps to put him in the hands of the proper authorities.

Mr. Dartmor, however, cooled down somewhat, along with his attack of the gout, only considering that old Ned had been headstrong; he made all the inquiries in his power as to who the child could be, writing letters for information to Lloyd's, and to all the other suitable sources. All that he could discover, after a great deal of trouble, was that two or three vessels had been wrecked on that coast, two of which were supposed to have come from the West Indies, and the other could never be distinctly traced. The result was, that it became an understood fact that little Alf must become, for the time at least, a fixture at Cliff Cottage.

After it was settled that the child was to remain with them for some considerable period, it became a question that somewhat troubled the worthy couple, by what surname the child was to be known. Now Dolly Gaskin was almost as decided as Ned was, about the supposed high position of the little foundling, so that an ordinary name would never suit. As for calling him by their own, it never entered their heads; for, had they not begun to build air castles already about his future? and such prospects as they imagined were in store for him, did not agree with their own obscure family name.

It chanced that about this time a small coaster, the 'Dove,' put into the little harbour of Hurstcliff, the captain of which was an old and valued friend of Ned Gaskin; indeed, Ned considered him one of the wonders of the age, for Captain Chunck had been a powder-monkey aboard the 'Athesa' frigate when Ned was a lad there. Chunck had struggled up from that obscure position, till, partly

by his own cleverness, and partly by the help of some money left to him by some relation, he had been able to become the commander and sole proprietor of the little coaster. When Ned and his wife had almost been driven to their wits' end about the child's name, they were delighted by seeing this great individual coming up the garden path, and, to judge by the loud hurrah from Ned, he must have been considered a very welcome guest. Chunck was a man of few words, stout, flabby, with short stumpy legs, and a body like a barrel, and with a head of hair like a mop. When he had been seated in Ned's easy-chair,—the only one that could hold him,—and when the long pipe that he usually smoked was placed upon a stool beside him, along with a mug of Dolly's celebrated home-brewed beer, his opinion was taken on the subject then under discussion. For a long time Chunck sat and smoked in silence, with the fingers of his right hand spread over his face—a sign that he was thinking very deeply. Ned sat opposite to him, shaking his head slowly, while he looked at his friend in an admiring way, every now and then whispering to Dolly, 'His a-thinking, missus; there's a heap o' thoughts in that 'ere knowledge-box.' Suddenly Captain Chunck uncovered his face, and allowed his weather eye to glitter full upon his old shipmate, while the other was screwed up so tight as to be almost invisible; then he solemnly pronounced the one word 'Jetsam,' and the next he was lost sight of under a cloud of tobacco smoke.

'Jetsam, Ned,—whatever can the captain mean?' said Dolly, in surprise. There was a sort of rumbling noise from behind the smoke, that formed itself into the words Ned thought, of 'flotsam and jetsam.'

'Flotsam and jetsam; that means, d'ye see, all things whatsoever as is found afloat or hove overboard upon the surface of the sea,' said Ned, waving his hand grandly to Dolly. Then with a more admiring look at his friend than ever, he continued, 'I know'd it, missus: soon as ever I see'd that old figure-head bearing down upon this

'ere cottage, says I to myself, says I, Here's the man that will put us straight in this here head business ; and now I sees it clear as a capstan bar. I know'd that 'ere knowledge-box was choke full o' larning. Till such times as he comes athwart his own lawful parents, in course the younker's name is Alf Jetsam.'

GRANDMAMMA'S KNITTING LESSON.

From the German of Löwenstein.

SLOWLY, gently, little fingers,

Now be careful how you hold :

What we learn with pain as children,

Gives us pleasure when we're old.

Hold the needle not so firmly ;

There's a loop—now bring it through :

What my Maggie cannot learn,

Margaret soon will learn to do !

Not so swiftly, little fingers !

Put the thread around with care :

Cautiously bring out the needle—

Now, another stitch is there !

Oh ! mamma will be so happy

When you lay your garland bright

Down upon her birthday table,

With these stockings, smooth and white !

Saying, ' Now you know the secret

Grandmamma and I have had !

Take me in your arms and kiss me,—

Oh, mamma, I am so glad !'

A. M.

POETIC NARCISSUS AND COMMON DAFFODIL.

'Fair daffodil, thou bendest o'er the stream,
 As thou would'st there thy mirrored self caress ;
 Thou art like one lost wholly in a dream
 Of silent, hopeless, deep unhappiness.'



POETIC NARCISSUS AND COMMON DAFFODIL.

MY DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS,—I dare say you all know the daffodil that grows in your gardens, and is often to be found wild near some of our woody streams, especially in the south of England,

AFFODIL.

'Drooping its beauty o'er the watery clearness,
Moving its own sad image into nearness ;'

a pale, yellow flower, with a circlet of lemon-coloured petals, surrounding a deeper yellow cup, in which the busy bee oft hides itself, buzzing in and out, humming and wheeling amongst the tall, sword-like green leaves that spring from the roots ; an early flower,

'That comes before the swallow dares, and takes
The winds of March with beauty.'

It belongs to the narcissus tribe, of which, I believe, we have only two other natives,—the two-flowered narcissus, which bears two flowers in its sheath instead of one, like the daffodil which I have sketched for you ; and the poetic narcissus, which you also see in the illustration, and which is a beautiful flower, with six snowy petals, expanded star-like round its yellow cup, edged with brilliant scarlet. It is planted in almost every garden, not so much for its beauty as its delicious fragrance, and grows so tall, that often after a shower, when its cup is filled with water, a sudden sweep of wind will snap the stem.

'Just as a lily pressed with heavy rain,
Which fills her cups with showers up to the brinks,
The weary stalk no longer can sustain
The head, that low beneath the burden sinks.'

Now, I am going to tell you a little fable of the daffodil, and how it gained its more poetic name of narcissus, which belonged to a beautiful youth, who had a sister as beautiful as himself, to whom he was devotedly attached. It is said they were never apart, but shared every joy or sorrow, joined in all sports, resting together on the green-sward, straying through the meadows, or wandering hand in hand by the streamlet side,—

'Like two blossoms on one stem,
They thus grew side by side.'

But, alas ! this beautiful sister died, and poor Narcissus roamed disconsolate through the woods, breathing

his lamentations to every shrub and flower associated with her memory, or, straying down to the water's brink, would bend over his own reflected image, which seemed as a vision of his beloved sister; and, bowing his head in silent grief, would refuse to be comforted. At length, so the old tale relates, his anguish became so great, that in despair he killed himself, and when the nymphs of the wood sought for his body, it had been changed into the flower which still bears his name.

Therefore, my little friends, whenever you see a daffodil in the woods, or pluck it from your garden border, remember poor Narcissus and his beautiful sister, and how they loved one another.

CHILDREN'S IDOLS.

AN ADDRESS.

BY THE REV. H. T. HOWAT, LIVERPOOL.



MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—I have little doubt but you are startled by the title of this paper. 'Children's Idols!' I hear you say; 'we don't live in India or Calabar; we're not heathens; why, then, speak of idolatry in connection with us?' Simply because I read that text in Scripture: 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen;' on which I propose to say one or two things which may be profitable to the dear little readers of *The Children's Hour*.

There are many other idols than Brahmah and Juggernaut. A great man called Bacon—of whom you boys will learn something when you go to college—has written

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a profound treatise on 'the Idols of the Mind,' or the prejudices that impede us in the acquiring of knowledge. Some parents, too indulgent, make idols of their children; and sometimes God, not so much in anger as in mercy, takes the 'children away. I have known persons who made a grand house their idol; others, who made their books their idols; others, who made a lap-dog their idol, and so on. I confess, however, that we have all, more or less, our idols; and that although I am about to speak of children's idols, these idols are not the children's only.

As the first idol, then, I present *Self-will*. What an old idol this is! and what an ugly one! It was this that cost man innocence and Paradise; and still its worship is very wide-spread. My young friends, especially, must be on their guard against it. I hear mamma say: 'John, my dear,—not away to school?' But John has a great many excuses and reasons. 'Tom Mitchell's not going, and Georgie Boyd's not going;' and so John thinks he shouldn't go either! Now, John, you're a little idolater. You're worshipping *Self-will*. Take care; for the boy who refuses to go to school, may some day or other refuse to go to business; may turn out an indolent good-for-nothing; be the laughing-stock of his neighbours, and the lamentation of all his friends. A dear little fellow, whom I know and love, was asked one day by two of his companions to 'come off and have some fishing.' 'I can't go,' he said, 'till I've asked mamma.' And thereupon his two companions made fun of him; and one of them said, 'I'm too big always to go and ask *my* mother.' I thought, when I heard of it, he must have been a very large young gentleman that. He was too big to ask and to obey his mother; but he wasn't too big to require his mother's daily care and attention. Take my advice, my young friends, and avoid those children who can speak disrespectfully of their parents. One of the grand mistakes of the prodigal son, of whom we read in Scripture, was this,—that he thought he had more sense than his father. Rather let it be yours to thank God you have

a father and mother; and always be ready to surrender your will to theirs. 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.'

Another little idol from which I wish you to 'keep' yourselves, is *Self-love*. Now there are some people in the world who can think of nobody but themselves. They seem to imagine everybody has been made for them, and that they have been made for nobody. A very old idol this too. You remember Cain worshipped it, when he put the question to God, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' I know two little friends who are depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank. They have 'an account with Her Majesty,' as it has been expressed, and sometimes they put in a shilling, and sometimes half-a-sovereign. But there is this understanding between them, they withdraw their deposits alternately. If Master Robert wants a new jacket, he gets it; but if, a month after, he should discover that he is greatly in need of a pair of new boots, he can't have them, till his fellow-depositor, Master Alexander, has received a new cap, a new tie, or something *he* requires. And in this way my two little friends are taught, among other useful things, their duties to each other. I was once visiting in a house where one of the brothers got the present of a box of confections, and how do you think he acted? He went out to the garden, the young glutton, and devoured the whole himself, without ever once saying to his brothers and sisters, 'Come and join me.' He was very ill next morning, and he deserved it, as the punishment for his selfishness. Learn then to have large loving hearts, my dear children. The world will treat you pretty much as you treat it. Those of you who know Edinburgh know the beautiful circular road termed the 'Queen's Drive.' Near one of the little lakes, on the borders of that 'Drive,' is a fine echo. You cry, 'Halloo,' and the echo answers, 'Halloo.' You praise the echo, and the echo gives you back your own praise. You call the echo bad names, and the echo returns them to yourself. So is it, my young friends, with

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the world. The world will give you pretty much what you give it. If you are selfish to the world, the world will be selfish to you. If you are open-hearted with the world, the world, as a rule, will be open-hearted with you. This is a mere statement of fact which experience confirms. Therefore, if for no higher reason than for this,—your own personal comfort,—obey the Master's voice when you hear Him say, 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.'

A third idol I desire to guard you against is, *the Love or Misuse of Money*. Now I think I see some dear little friend pausing over this statement, and saying, 'I've no money, so I needn't read this, it doesn't apply to me.' Well, my young friend, my opinion is that little boys and girls shouldn't have too much money. I don't object to Master Harry or Miss Mary Jane having a shilling occasionally; but I don't like to see the whole shilling go in 'sweets,' to the ruining of the stomach, and the acquiring of extravagant habits.

I once knew two little rogues who were allowed rather too many odd sixpences. Well, what do you think they once did? Why, they went to a tobacco shop and bought cigars. The one was about eight, and the other about nine years of age,—and not very bad boys after all. Having obtained the cigars, they went down to their papa's garden, and began to smoke. But they didn't smoke long. The little rascals took ill; were discovered by one of the servants, brought up to the house, and packed off to bed. This comes, you see, from allowing little boys too much of their own way with money, and their making an improper use of it. I have before me at this moment the case of a Sunday scholar I once knew. He received every Sunday evening, from his parents, a penny to put into the missionary box. But on the way to the Sunday school there was a little shop open that sold 'sweets.' And what was the result? Too often the penny intended for the missionary box, went to purchase confections; and thus three sins were

committed—the Sabbath was broken, the boy's parents were deceived, and the cause of Christ robbed of what was justly its due. Now, I know, it would be very unnatural, and even absurd, to expect children to be anything else but children. I am not particularly fond of seeing 'old heads on young shoulders.' Whenever I notice my young friend Thomas there, poring over his book as if he were a philosopher, I take the book from him, and bid him go and have a romp. I believe, therefore, in children being children, and do not like to see them trying to be something else. But just as 'the boy is the father of the man,'—just as the tree inclines as the twig is bent,—so habits acquired in early life frequently lay the foundation of the whole future character. Let my young friends, therefore, beware of making a bad use of money, or making it their idol. I remember of reading somewhere: 'The man without money is poor; but the man with nothing *but* money is poorer still.' There is something far better than the riches of this world, even the riches that are in Christ. No one in his senses would despise, or can ever afford to despise, that which the wisest of men declared to 'answer all things;' but no man in his senses would ever put the wealth which is too often known only by its wings, in the place of the enduring treasure of heaven. Let my little readers, therefore, guard against the two extremes, of being misers or spendthrifts; and while in after life they may seek, and very properly, to make the most of this world, let it never be in the room, or at the expense, of the other.

The fourth idol, my dear children, I wish you to 'keep' yourselves from is *Dress*. Now, I like to see children tidily put on. The Duke of Edinburgh was in Liverpool the other day, laying the foundation-stone of a children's hospital; and there, all along Myrtle Street, were ranged the children of the charitable institutions in the town,—the girls in their snow-white mantles or 'tippetts,' and the boys in their shining 'corduroys,'

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accompanied, too, by *their own* band. I have seldom seen a prettier sight in my life. I am very fond, then, of neatness and tidiness of attire. For example, my young friend James got the present of a pair of green kid gloves the other day. He stood four inches taller the first time he put them on ; and I never see him take them off but he blows into the fingers of them, puffs them up like a balloon, and then deposits them inside his cap on the lobby-table. Now I like that. The boy who is careful of his gloves will be careful of something better by and by. But here is something I don't like. My little friend Lizzie was getting a beautiful summer bonnet. It came home at last. She was all impatience to see it. She put it on ; and there, as she stood before the glass, she thought she had never seen anything so lovely. And then the Sunday school was coming. How Jessie and Mary and Agnes would envy her ! They hadn't bonnets like her. They couldn't dress so nicely as her. None of them looked so well as her. And foolish little Lizzie was quite led away with vanity because she had simply got a new covering for her head. I wonder if she was as fond of her Bible as she was of her bonnet,—if she looked at the one as often as she looked at the other. Ah ! I fear there are a great many Lizzies in the world ; and I trust that no dear little girl who reads this paper will add another to the number. There are two very touching verses in St. John's Gospel, if we read them rightly : ' Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments ; and made four parts, to every soldier a part ; and also his coat : now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be : that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots.' Such was the treatment which even the *clothing* of Jesus received. How then can we make our clothing minister to our vanity, and

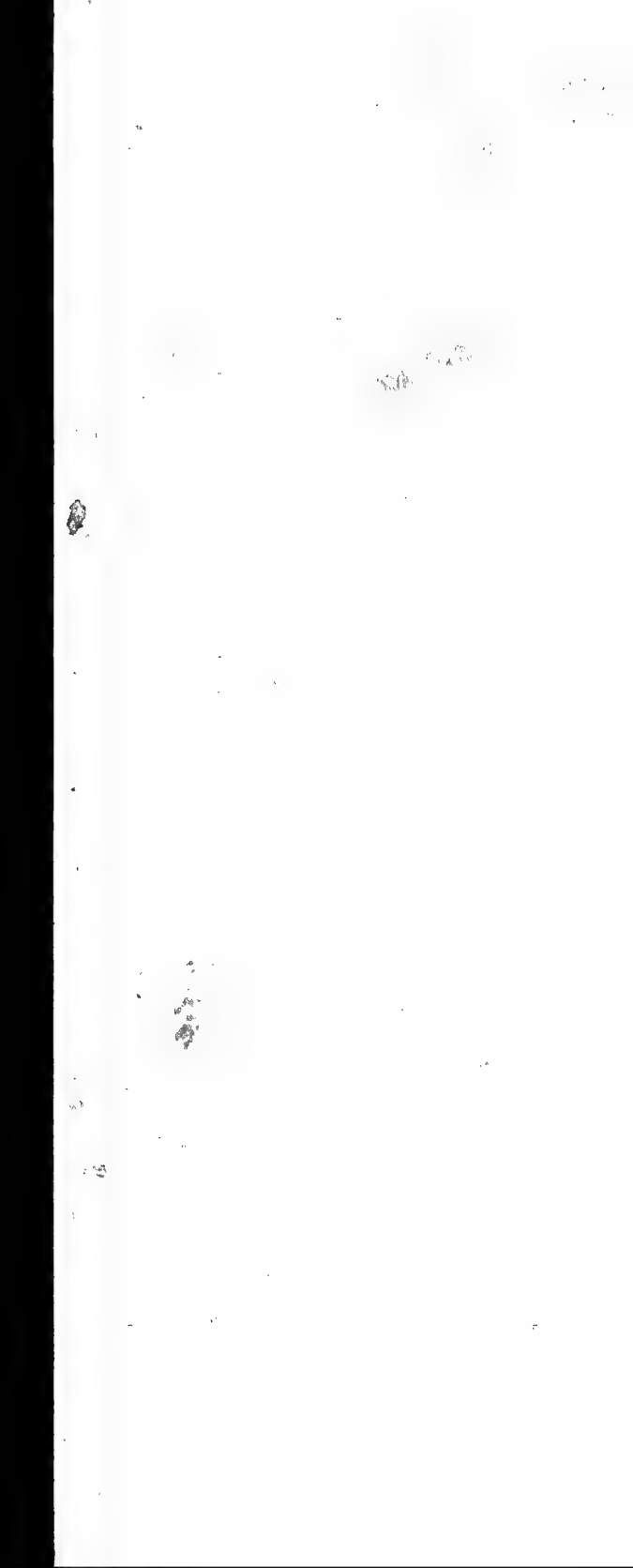
permit it to drive out other and more serious thoughts? There is only one Robe, my young friends, which you and I, and all men, should be really in earnest about having; and that is the Robe of Jesus' Righteousness, clad in which we shall stand even before God, accepted in the Beloved.

The last little idol I wish you not to make too much of, is *Play*. Now, my dear children, don't misunderstand me. I believe in play, and in a good deal of it. I like to see a romping little fellow whipping his top, or exercising his ingenuity in framing paper ships, marshalling his wooden soldiers, or waxing eloquent over the contents of his Noah's Ark. I like to see a golden-haired girl skipping with her ropes, or trundling her hoop, shaping the newest patterns for her doll's dress, or joining her merry comrades in a brisk, lively race over field or lawn. I believe in holidays; and honestly say, that I trust no little readers of *The Children's Hour*, when they get holidays, ever learn a single lesson, or work a single sum, during the whole course of them. Away and enjoy yourselves. But then you know, my young friends, it mustn't be all play with you,—every day is not to be a holiday. Really to enjoy holidays, you must have earned them by hard, honest, downright work. And then when holidays are over, you must sit down to work again, and be more diligent than ever. There now, Miss Christina, you have been away at the coast. What sailing you had, and bathing, and summer evenings on the sands! And now you are back again at school. How you must make progress with your music, and try to play gracefully, and not put your third finger where your first should be! And you have also your French; and especially these very irregular and most temper-trying verbs. Don't be afraid of them, look them full in the face, and say, 'I'm determined to learn you.' And then you have your English History, with the dates so difficult to remember; and your Geography, at times so puzzling, that you wonder why anybody ever made a map; and your Arithmetic, with

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all the perplexities of Proportion and Interest; and your Crochet, with (to me at least) all its mysteries of 'chain' and 'long-stitch,'—no matter, feel all this to be duty, and work bravely, cheerfully on. A little fellow was out one day in the field where his father was ploughing. He was getting tired, and at length said, 'Father, when do you mean to stop?' 'Another fur (*i.e.* furrow), and then,' was the reply. Patiently the boy waited; but, to his amazement, another furrow was commenced. Again he inquired when his father intended to give over. And again came the reply, 'Another fur, and then.' Down he sat till the other furrow was completed, thinking that this was certain to be the last. But again to his inquiry, there only came the response, 'Another fur, and then.' 'What do you mean, father?' he at length exclaimed. 'You said you would be finished long ago.' 'I mean, my boy, another fur, and then another; and take that for your motto throughout your whole life.' Yes, my young friend Christina, and all my young friends together,—'another fur, and then another;' let this, during your working days and hours, be your single-minded, single-hearted aim. And above all, in the midst of all other progress, don't forget that progress, the termination of which is in heaven. 'Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding' in this. Let every other idol fall, Dagon-like, before the Lord. Let the one only living and true God have the supremacy in your hearts. Let nothing ever successfully interfere with your duty to Him. Serve 'Him first, Him last, Him midst, Him without end,' till, called away from earth, His own voice shall say, 'Come up hither,' and yours shall be the better service of the better land for ever. And now, my dear children, may the God of peace make you perfect in every good work to do His will; increase you in grace and wisdom as in years; and daily 'keep' you, as you will try to 'keep yourselves,' from all ensnaring and delusive idols. Amen.



LITTLE VOICES.

I am but a little Brook,—
Yet on me
Do the stars as brightly gleam
As on broad and mighty stream;
And, singing night and day,
I sparkle on my way
To the sea.

I am but a little Ray,
Sent to earth
By the sun so great and bright,
Giving food, and heat, and light;
Yet stately royal halls
And lowly cottage walls
Greet my birth.

I am but a little Flower,
As you see;
Yet the sunshine and the dew
Give me scent and beauty too;
And I envy not the rarest,
The tallest, nor the fairest
Forest tree.

I am but a little Lamb,
Tiny white;
Yet in the meadows sweet,
To ramble and to bleat,
Or, to race beneath the trees
With the summer-evening breeze,
Is my delight.

Little Voices.

I am but a little Bird,
Full of glee :
Don't you hear me singing, now,
As I hop from bough to bough ;
Plucking berries here and there,
Flying freely everywhere ?
Happy me !

I am but a little Child,
It is true ;
Yet in my heart I know
The grace of God will grow,
If I love to sing His praise,
And to follow in His ways,
My life through.

Child and Bird—Lamb, Flower, and Ray,
And little Brook !
Sing again your simple song—
Cheering hearts no longer young ;
Tell us of the day to come—
Youth renewed, and heavenly home—
If we look.

Look to what?—to wealth and state?
Nay ! Ah, nay!—
Envy not the rich and great ;
Bless thine own more tranquil fate.
Look to Jesus, Friend of all—
Creatures large, and creatures small—
Look, and pray.

AGNES VEITCH.

SKETCHES IN INDIA.

THE HILLS.



DURING the hot season in India, it is a common practice for those who can afford it, to escape from the heat of the plains to one of the many beautiful stations generally spoken of as 'the Hills.' I was glad of an opportunity of visiting one of these retreats, and left Bombay with my friends during April, when the heat was becoming very oppressive, to spend some time at Matheran, a hill station situated within about five hours' distance from the city. The first part of the journey was performed in a very common-place manner—in the railway train; but when we reached the station at the foot of the hill, we had to exchange this modern way of travelling for the Indian palanquin or palkee, a very antiquated conveyance, consisting simply of a long-shaped box, carried on men's shoulders. You creep into it by a sliding door in the side; you lie down in a reclining position, and suddenly find yourself pitched backwards and forwards till your conveyance is supported, by a pole at each end, upon the shoulders of four men, who trot along with you, making a horrid groaning noise which they seem to mistake for singing. In this way I was carried up the mountain. The road was good, but it passed along the edge of fearful precipices; and if the bearers had made a false step, it was frightful to think what would have become of the palkee and its inhabitant. There were no less than twelve men to each palkee, and they were a wild-looking set; they had to change places very often, carrying the palkee four at a time, and when it grew dark some of them carried torches. It was strange to see

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oneself surrounded by such savage-looking, half-clad, black men, among these wild rocks, in the middle of the night. However, they took very good care of me, and brought me soon to a nice little cottage on the top of the mountain, where all was comfortable,—lamps lighted, servants waiting, supper ready.

It is not always that journeys among the mountains of India are made in such safety. A friend of mine met with a very alarming adventure in going up to one of the hill stations, situated among wilder and much more lonely scenes than the one to which I went. The night had closed in round her, and the bearers of her palkee lost their way. They left her in order to seek the road, and, if possible, to get lights; and while she lay in her palkee awaiting their return, she heard, to her alarm, some great wild animals come out of the jungle, and draw nearer and nearer to her. Soon they came up to her, and snuffed, and puffed, and played all round her palkee! Luckily, she had closed the doors and blinds; and she lay quite still, feeling how perfectly helpless she was, and yet remembering that there is One above who is able to take care of the weakest, and whose ear is always open to the prayer of His people. 'God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble;' and so it proved in this case, for she cried, and He helped her. She heard the wild creatures, one after another, go away: there seemed to be three of them, one large and two smaller; but she could not think what they were. They went into the jungle; and you may fancy how glad she was to hear them going farther and farther off, crashing the branches and tumbling through the thicket in their rough play, till at last she could hear them no longer, and all was silent. Soon the bearers came back bringing lights, and she was carried to the house where she was going. Her friends at first laughed at her account of the adventure; but they did not laugh the next day, when the gentlemen of the party discovered great foot-marks at the place, and having gone out to hunt, returned at night with a *tigress*

and her two cubs! They had killed them near the place where the bearers had left the palkee, and there could be no doubt that these were the creatures who had come and played around it, and who might have crushed its frail sides to pieces with one blow of their paws! I need not tell you, that if the lady had been thankful before for her merciful preservation, she was still more thankful now, when she saw from what terrible animals she had been preserved by the hand of God, while she lay defenceless and alone in the darkness, in the midst of the Indian forest.

It was a comfort to me to know that there were no tigers at Matheran, for I used to take long walks and rides in the woods there, which were full of beauty. I was awakened early in the morning by the sweet song of the bulbul or Indian nightingale; and at that time it was very delightful to roam about while all was cool and fresh, and the clouds were rising from the mountains around, and the hot sun was still below the horizon. There were many interesting objects to be seen in those woods; and I am sure my young readers would have enjoyed a ramble among them. On every side one could hear the monkeys calling to each other, and sometimes one could see them sitting like little old men with black faces and grey greatcoats, till they gave a sudden spring up among the trees, and away through the woods, their long tails dangling behind them! Sometimes I used to come upon ant-hills as big as haystacks, and all built up in curious little pinnacles, as if the tiny builders had been ambitious to copy Sir Walter Scott's monument in Edinburgh. It was interesting also to observe the plan of those just begun. They quite puzzled me at first; and I thought some children must have been amusing themselves with making mud-pies in the fashion of a set of tea-trays, one within the other! One of the cleverest insect builders that I saw, however, was not an ant, but a mason-bee, a beautiful slender-waisted insect, with black and yellow striped coat. She took a fancy to build her nest

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or cell in my bedroom, and I loved to watch her bringing in a little ball of red mud in her forefeet, and plastering it all round in the smoothest and neatest manner, till she had made a little house for her future family, of the most tidy and perfect kind. It was about the size of an ordinary schoolroom ink-bottle, with a hole in the top, and a neatly turned over edge, so like the common earthenware vessels of the natives, that, observing the resemblance, they call the insect herself 'the female potter.' When she has finished the cell, she brings four or five green caterpillars into it, in a torpid or half dead condition, to serve as food for her children. She next deposits her eggs, and then she makes a little lid for her vessel and closes it all tightly up. When the eggs come out, the little grubs live upon the caterpillars, till they are old enough to break up the walls of their house and fly away.

There were many other beautiful and curious insects, which would have charmed the eye of a naturalist, in the woods of this station. There were exquisite beetles, green, gold, and purple; large blue butterflies that floated in the air like little open books; and spiders of the funniest shapes that ever were seen—some all legs and no body, others all body and scarcely any legs; and I saw one very stout-looking lady spider who was carrying a whole family of about a hundred little spiders on her back! Then at night, as soon as it became dark, the air was full of lovely glittering fireflies, sparkling all over the bushes; while, on the ground below, the glow-worm lighted up his beautiful steady little lamp of pale greenish lustre. There are so many insect-plagues in India, that it is well to be able to find amusement in observing the insect beauties; and indeed it is well, wherever we are, to learn the habit of *using our eyes*. Many curious sights are lost, not so much for want of opportunities as for want of observation; and it is when we use our eyes that we discover how wonderful and how beautiful God's works are, and how true it is that 'in wisdom He has made them all.' So, my dear little readers, let me advise you to *learn to observe* while

you are young, and then you will never come in from your country walks with weary stupid faces, saying, 'It was so tiresome! there was nothing to be seen!' Learn to see, and you will always find objects worth seeing wherever you go.

LITTLE LIGHTS.



ANNIE and Carrie Seton returned home from their Christmas visit, a visit during which, for the first time in their young lives, they had been in a house where God was loved and served. True, one of them had learned from her Cousin Katie's gentle words and gentler deeds, to know and love the Saviour who had so loved her. Very desolate was she as she parted with the only friends from whom she could hope for help and encouragement in her earnest desire to be henceforth the servant of Christ. She said something of her feelings to her sister, who only laughed at her. 'So you are going to be a saint too!' 'I want with all my heart to be a child of God,' she replied; 'but I don't know what being a saint means.' Carrie turned away to read her story-book; while Annie remembered Katie's words about the good Shepherd, who would watch over her, and teach her, and guide her, and she was comforted. From the depth of her lonely heart, she asked that she might be His loving and obedient child.

The report of their visit given by the two children to their aunt, Mrs. Selwyn, was widely different. Carrie declared, in the most unmeasured terms, that it was as stupid as it could be; that she was delighted to come home.

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our new dresses, nor wished their own were as grand; and they like making clothes for poor people. One day they wanted me to help them to make a frock for a little child in India,—an ugly little black girl that they had never seen! I just repeated what I heard you say so often, that "charity begins at home," when Miss Morton quite gravely asked me, "What charity I was doing at home?" Certainly I was a little ashamed, I must confess, for I could not think of anything except giving money in church at charity sermons; and as we don't give our own money, that can't be our charity. Then I was going to say we gave our old clothes to nurse for her children; but as we don't want them any longer, and we get new instead, I was sure she would not count that charity. Then you would suppose I had said something quite wicked, she spoke so seriously—quite preached a sermon about God's love to us, and all that sort of thing, just as if that had anything to do with our charity.'

Aunt Grace laughed heartily at Carrie's cleverness, and quite agreed that it was very absurd indeed to care for an ugly little black child, thousands of miles away.

'At all events,' said Annie, who could not before get in a word of remonstrance, 'they are the best, and the kindest, and the happiest children I ever met. We have a much grander house, and finer clothes, and more playthings; but I am sure, Carrie, they are ten thousand times happier than we are. I never heard them quarrel; they were always ready to give up to their brothers or to us. Then as to their being stupid: though they never had a governess or masters like us, they know a great deal more than we do.'

'They certainly know the Bible, and other stupid things, better than we do,' said Carrie.

'Yes, Carrie; and I have found out that it is just because they know and love the Bible, and the Saviour the Bible teaches of, that they are so good and so happy.'

'So you are going to be as stupid yourself!—I declare it is too bad.'

Annie's eyes filled with tears ; an angry reply rose to her lips, but was not spoken.

Mrs. Selwyn was greatly annoyed, and said, ' Annie, I do hope you are not so silly as to want to be more religious than other people,—setting yourself up to be wise and good ; I shall not allow it. Besides, you have contradicted your sister very rudely. I am very much displeased ; you may go to your room, and remain there for the rest of the evening.'

Poor Annie ! was she to be reprov'd and punished for trying to do what was right ? Could it be that her morning's prayer had not been heard ? was Jesus really with her ? With a very heavy heart she sat down in her solitude, and compared her situation that evening, with the happy fireside of the cousins she had parted with that morning.

Had the good Shepherd forgotten, or was He unmindful of the little lamb who longed to follow Him ?

Not so. He had given her the courage to speak the truth ; He had enabled her to keep down the angry feelings that had tried hard to rise and gain utterance. He had now led her to that quiet room that she might be alone with Him, that she might pour out her heart before Him, that He might speak words of comfort and of guidance.

At first her heart turned to Katie. She longed to tell her all ; but the earthly friend was far away, and could not hear : so she turned then to Him who is never absent, who is ever ready to hear. She told Him all as simply and as fully as she would have done to her cousin, had she been beside her. He gathered the lamb with His arm, He carried her in His bosom, He brought His own words to her remembrance ; and when she laid her tired head that night on her pillow, she was no longer desolate, for she had found a Friend, wise, mighty, and loving, who had died to save her, who had promised, ' I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'

Days and weeks passed on ; Mrs. Selwyn's displeasure

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did not wear off, but rather increased, as she observed the influence true religion was exercising on the little girl's character and ways. She was better pleased with Carrie's ill-temper and selfishness, than with Annie's gentleness; for her heart, being unrenewed by the Holy Spirit of God, was at enmity against Him who was leading Annie in the paths of righteousness. Try as she would, she could neither please aunt nor sisters; while any outbreak of the old impatient temper was met by the mocking words, 'Very fine, indeed, for a saint!' Annie did struggle hard to overcome the temper that had been unchecked for years; bitterly did she grieve, and earnestly seek forgiveness, when it proved too strong for her. All this was very hard to bear. How often the weary child cried herself to sleep, only One knew! but it was He who has said, 'They who sow in tears shall reap in joy.'

A letter from Katie, which now and then reached her, was one of her greatest pleasures. She had made no complaints of the unkindness she met with; yet her cousin could not but understand something of what she was bearing. About this time a letter came, in which Katie reminded her that all God's children were lights; that God wanted them to shine brightly for Him; that He had placed her in her home there to shine for Him; that while she kept close to Jesus,—the 'Light of the World,' 'the True Light,'—she would shine, and that, shining in His light, she might have the great happiness of leading her aunt and Carrie to Jesus, that they might love Him and become His lights too.

That little word about the light was a great help. 'I must try and shine brightly for Jesus' sake,' she thought. As He is light, the more like to Him I grow, the brighter I shall be; and from that hour, her constant aim and desire was to be like Jesus.

With no teacher but her God and His book, with no encouragement but the thought that she was pleasing Him, she went on her quiet way, the little spark of light

growing brighter and steadier ; so that men saw her good works, and were constrained to glorify her Father who was in heaven. Her lessons were learnt more diligently than ever before, for she did it now unto God, as the work He appointed her. Her governess and other teachers wondered what had come over Annie,—the lesson was always well learned ; the shadow of ill-temper no longer darkened her face ; the rude and saucy answer was never given now.

The maid said, 'It is now no trouble to wait on Miss Annie ; what can have changed her ? Since that visit last Christmas, she has not been like the same child. What can have made such a difference ?'

Carrie one day overheard this often-repeated remark, and said, laughing, 'Don't you know, Jessie, Miss Annie is a saint now ?'

'True, indeed, Miss Carrie ; I wish you too were a saint, if it's that makes the change.'

'I should be very sorry to be so stupid, Jessie ; and so would Aunt Grace.'

The words were lightly spoken, yet they rang in that maid's heart all day. 'A saint ! what is a saint ? If I was a saint, would I be patient, and kind, and gentle like Miss Annie ? O God ! make me a saint.'

That evening, when she was brushing her young lady's hair, she said to her, 'Miss Annie, will you tell me about being a saint ? Miss Carrie tells me you are one, and I should like to be one myself.'

'I don't know very well, Jessie, what a saint means. Aunt Grace and Carrie often call me a saint, but it's when they are vexed with me. I think, however, it is being made holy, or sanctified by the Holy Ghost. And I remember, in one of the epistles, St. Paul calls the people he is writing to, 'saints and faithful brethren,' so I suppose all God's people are saints ; and I do so want to please the Lord Jesus. He is so very good, and loved me so much as to give His life for me. I want to be a little light, and shine for Him. Jessie, if He was your Friend, you could

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'Oh, Miss! but do you think He would be my friend?
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always thought it must be so stupid to be religious; but
now, when I see how it makes you patient when the
Mistress and Miss Carrie are so hard on you, I am sure
it must be a good and a happy thing.'

'Jessie, Jesus must love you, for He died for sinners;
and you are a sinner, so He died for you. I know very
little myself; but I shall like very much to tell you all I
do know, and let us both ask Him to give us His Holy
Spirit, who is the great Teacher.'

Morning and evening the little girl read for her maid,
and taught her the precious truths of the gospel; but
more persuasive than her words were the gentle deeds in
which her light shone.

Jessie's progress was very slow, but she was seeking
God early, and she found Him. When Annie was puzzled
by her difficulties, which was not seldom the case, she
took them to her Father in heaven, and sought their
solution in His word, and there sooner or later she
found it. Strange and difficult did she find many parts
of that word; but she ever kept her hand on the clue to
its understanding. The utter sinfulness of man, his
inability to save himself, and the wonderful plan that
God had made for his salvation in Christ Jesus. This
guided her through much that was obscure, so that she
did not stumble nor go astray in the dark places.

Soon there were two lights, instead of one, shining in
that dark house. God had a witness for Himself in the
servants' hall as well as in the drawing-room; and all saw
that they had been with Jesus.

Mrs. Selwyn could not much longer resist the little
girl's influence for good. Gradually, though slowly, her
displeasure wore away. The tree which bore such fruits
as patience, industry, gentleness, and obedience, she was
obliged to acknowledge must be good. She watched her



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silently, to find out where she got her strength. Carrie enlightened her somewhat, by saying one day, 'Is it not very odd, Aunt Grace, that Annie likes reading her Bible so much? I think it is so dull and tiresome.'

Her aunt made no reply, but thought, 'Reading the Bible has done it. I will read it too.'

Little did Annie know that the light was spreading. Mrs. Selwyn was reading her Bible as she never had read it before; she was seeking that Annie's Saviour might be hers. Long did she grope as in the dark; many a time was she ready to give up; but One whom she knew not yet had taken her by the hand, and was leading her whither she thought not. There was no outward change as yet; increasing kindness to Annie was the only difference observable. Carrie's ill-temper and her jealousy, as she saw how Annie was silently making her way into the warmest part of her aunt's heart, were at times very hard to bear; yet her Saviour's presence, her aunt's kindness, Jessie's gratitude and sympathy, oft-times made her young heart leap for joy, and the little light shone clearer and brighter.

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THE CHILDHOOD OF WOLFGANG MOZART.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE.

BY ZAIDA, AUTHOR OF 'HELEN DUNDAS, OR THE PASTOR'S WIFE,'
'SHADOWS AND SUNSHINE,' AND OTHER TALES, ETC.



APA,' said Charlie and Alice Montagu, one evening, 'when we were saying the fifth commandment to you last Sunday, you promised to tell us a story about two little children who obeyed that commandment. Could you tell it to us now? we would like so much to hear it.'

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The Childhood of Wolfgang Mozart.

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'Most willingly,' replied their father ; and seating him-
self in his arm-chair, with the children beside him, he
told them the following true story :—

'Once on a time, in the wonderful old town of Prague,
close by the river side, was a small house, in an upper
room of which, on the evening about which I am going
to tell you, was the organist of Prague, with his wife and
two children,—a girl who looked about eleven years old,
and an intelligent but delicate boy of six. Judging by
the appearance of the room, they must have been very
poor ; for, although the weather was bitterly cold, there
was not any fire, and the whole furniture of the room
consisted of six straw chairs, a table, and an old piano.
And although the children's clothes were tolerably good,
yet the father's coat was almost thread-bare, and the
mother's dress was so patched and darned and mended,
that it would not be easy to tell of what material it had
been originally made.'

'I wonder what they were doing, papa ?' asked
Charlie.

'The father was reading a large old Bible,' replied Mr.
Montagu, 'the mother was working busily, and the little
girl was knitting, while the boy, who had been running
about for some time, hoping that some one would talk to
him, at last, with a half-offended air, climbed up on a
stool, and sat down to the piano. He first played over
the scales with wonderful correctness, and then, as if a
sudden thought struck him, he went from scales to
chords, from chords to one of Dussek's sonatas ; and
then abandoning himself to his rather capricious imagi-
nation, his tiny fingers flew over the keys, striking every
note with such force, that the very windows vibrated,
while, at the same time, his touch was so exquisitely
expressive, that his father laid down his book, and his
mother her work, to listen to him.

"Come here and kiss me,—come, Master Wolfgang,"
said the old organist, with all the delight of a father,
added to that of a musician ; "with God's help you will

be a great man, a great master, and a great composer some time or other. What a pity it is I am not rich!"

"Father," interrupted the little boy, emboldened by the praises which yet he only half understood—"Father, when will supper be ready? I am so very hungry."

"Poor child," said his mother, sadly, as she went to the cupboard and took out a piece of dry bread, which she gave her son. "Eat that, for I have nothing else to give you."

"And my sister?" said Wolfgang, taking the bread.

"I have some for her also, when she is hungry," answered his mother.

"And you yourself, mother?"

"I am not hungry, darling," she answered.

"And my father?" added the child anxiously.

"Your father?—no; he is not hungry either," she said, unable to keep back her tears.

"Then the little girl ran to her mother, and throwing her arms round her neck, she said, "There is not any bread for you and my father, and that is the reason you say you are not hungry; and I am not hungry either, darling mother."

Wolfgang looked at them earnestly, but did not speak.

"No, Frederica, my child, I am not hungry,—indeed, I am not. Come, eat your bread at once; I only wish it was something better."

"Very well, mother, I will eat it; but only on condition that you take half."

"And I will divide mine with father," said Wolfgang, cutting his bread into two. "Take it now, father, take it," he added, stamping his feet with energy; "for if you do not eat it, as sure as my name is Wolfgang Mozart, I will not touch my share."

A tear fell from the poor organist's eyes, on the bread which his child gave him. "We will do as the children wish," he said to his wife. "But, O our gracious God! why hast Thou made us so poor?"

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"Are you then very poor?" asked Wolfgang, lovingly.

"I am indeed," replied his father. "But though for twenty years I have never spent a franc for my amusement, yet, thank God, I have never gone into debt, and that is a great mercy. I work hard now to support you and Frederica, and I hope that before many years you will be able to support yourselves."

"Yes, and support you and mother too," said the little girl.

"In fact," said Wolfgang, with an air of determination, which contrasted strangely with his almost baby face, and so gentle voice,—“in fact, papa, I think you have worked quite long enough for us, and that it is quite time for us to work for you.”

"But you are too young," said his father, tenderly—"too young and too small."

"Too small!" answered Wolfgang, indignantly. "Too small! why, I am very nearly as large as my piano!"

"My poor dear child," said his mother, as she passed her thin, worn fingers through the golden curls of her boy, "what could you do?"

"My father, who understands music, says that I play right well. I could give lessons on the piano."

"His father and mother could not help smiling in the midst of their tears.

"And to whom would you give lessons?" asked the former. "Where could you get pupils younger than yourself?"

"I could give lessons to older people," said Frederica, thoughtfully; "and just listen to me for a moment. When we were taking a walk the other day near the castle, the lady of the castle saw us, and calling me, she asked if we were not the children of Mozart, the organist of the chapel? I said we were. Then pointing to Wolfgang, she asked if that was the little boy who played so beautifully on the piano. 'Yes, madam, at your service,' Wolfgang answered. And then the lady asked us to walk up to the castle with her, and asked him to play on

The Childhood of Wolfgang Mozart.

her piano. Oh, papa, it was *such* a beautiful piano! it had golden flowers inlaid in the wood! And she was so pleased with Wolfgang and me,—for *I* played also,—that she gave us a whole ducat;—but you know that, mother, for I gave it to you the moment we came home.”

“Yes, my child, and you told me the story also. Why have you told it again?”

“*I* know why she tells it again,” said Wolfgang; “if papa allows us, we will travel all over the country. We are very pretty,—at least Frederica is, for the lady of the castle told her so; and we will go about everywhere, and play for people; and we will get a great deal of money, and give it all to you, and then you will not be poor any longer.”

“I declare,” said the organist, “that is not a bad idea.”

“But it would tire the poor children too much,” said the mother.

“It might tire Frederica,” answered Wolfgang; “but as to me, *I* am not so easily tired. Why, I could climb up our great hill twenty times a day, so I certainly will set out if papa allows me.”

“And so will I too,” said Frederica; “the joy of earning money for you and my father will prevent my being tired.”

“My precious children!” said the organist; “I am not poor while I have you; you are better than gold to me.”

“Leopold,” said his wife, anxiously, “you surely are not thinking of making money by those two poor children?”

“And why not,” replied Mozart, “if it be the will of God?”

“Because I am afraid—”

“Afraid, mother!” said Wolfgang; “*I* am not afraid. I know very well how to walk into a drawing-room, and sit down to the piano. You shall see how I will get on. I will play, play, play, until you and my father have plenty of money.”

"And when Wolfgang is tired I will take his place," said Frederica. "Dearest mother, I entreat of you not to object to our plan and I will ask God every night and morning to allow us to help you and papa."

"Oh yes, mother," said Wolfgang, "I will be such a good child, and get such quantities of money. You know you often told us that God loves and blesses children who honour their father and mother, and He will bless us. But now I must eat my supper, I am so hungry. And papa, will you tell me the story about St. John that I love so much?"

"Willingly, my child," replied his father. And so, when Wolfgang had finished his supper, he took him on his knee, and began the story. But in a few minutes his head was leaning on his father's shoulder, and he was fast asleep.

"Just see how easily he is tired," said his mother reproachfully; "and yet you would take him about the country to earn a livelihood!"

"God is good, my wife," replied Mozart. "He is ever ready to give strength to the weak, courage to the timid, and help to all those who put their trust in Him. Tomorrow morning I will set off with the children. God will watch over us, so we need not fear anything. So pack up our clothes to-night, for by sunrise I hope we shall be far on our way."

"God's will be done," said the good woman, as she prepared to obey her husband's wishes.

"And now the scene changes," said Mr. Montagu, "and we must take a peep into the palace at Vienna, where the Empress Maria Theresa, wife of the Emperor Francis the First, was receiving the guests she had invited to a grand concert given by her at the palace.

"All the great people of the city were there. The room was brilliantly lighted, and the ladies' dresses were blazing with diamonds, laid over the most beautiful embroidery, while the officers' uniforms vied with them in splendour. Suddenly the door was opened, and, to the utter amazement

ment of the guests, a rather poorly dressed man and two little children entered. The man looked somewhat anxious and frightened; but the children did not seem to be in the least disconcerted at the sight of so much grandeur, and so many finely-dressed people, who were all looking at them with the most undisguised curiosity.

"Is this the organist of Prague and his children, of whom I have heard so much?" said the Empress to the master of the ceremonies.

"Yes, please your Majesty," he replied; "and I can assure you that your Majesty has not heard too much. I heard the children play last night at the French Ambassador's, where I had the honour of being invited. The little girl is wonderful; but the little boy is more surprising still."

"Make them begin," said the Empress. Accordingly the master of the ceremonies asked Mozart to desire his children to perform. He himself led them to the piano, before which he seated them. Very pretty they both look, — Frederica dressed in a simple white frock, Wolfgang in a little lilac tunic.

Frederica played first. Her execution was so clear and so brilliant, that every one was charmed with the pale, delicate-looking little girl; and when she had finished, she was greeted with the warmest applause.

"Oh! that is nothing in comparison to my brother," she said humbly; and then watched with almost motherly interest that he should be comfortably seated at the piano, and be raised high enough to have his hands perfectly free.

Then the little fellow smiled graciously to the company, and without an effort, or dreaming of the admiration he would excite, he began. Sometimes his fingers seemed actually to fly over the keys, so lightly did he touch them; then he would change, and linger on every note, giving them an expression so soft, so tender, so harmonious, that tears started to the eyes of all who heard him. Every look was fixed on his little fingers, — so nimble, so flowing,

so expressive! And the Emperor and Empress, in company with their guests, were fairly enchanted, as well as astonished.

When Wolfgang stopped, weary and out of breath, the Empress made a sign that he should come and kiss her. He rose to obey; but, stunned and bewildered as he was, between the praises lavished on him, and the dazzling light of the room, as well as tired of having remained so long in the same position, the very first step that he took on the highly polished marble floor, he slipped and fell.

‘A young lady quickly ran to assist him, saying kindly, “I hope you are not ill, my little friend?”

‘As if dazzled by the beauty of the lady, Wolfgang remained a moment without speaking, and then putting his little arms round her neck, he said, “I think I would like to marry you.”

‘A merry peal of laughter resounded through the room, but did not at all trouble the little child, who added, “My name is Wolfgang Mozart,—what is yours?”

“‘Mine is Marie Antoinette,” replied the young lady.’

‘Oh, papa!’ interrupted Alice Montagu, ‘was that the poor Marie Antoinette who was afterwards beheaded?’

‘The very same,’ replied her father. ‘Poor thing! her fate would have been a happier one had she been Mozart’s wife, instead of Queen of France. She was beheaded on the very day that Mozart was publicly crowned at Vienna. But we must return to him, as he was seated on the Empress’ knee, while she gave him plenty of cakes and bonbons.

“‘I am afraid you must be very tired, my child,” she said kindly.

“‘No, indeed, madam,” he replied. “I am so happy when I please papa, that I never feel tired.”

“‘And I suppose you love your father very much then?”

“‘Oh yes, madam, I do; he is so good and kind, and never scolds me.”

“‘I suppose you are a very good child?”

"I believe I am, madam," he replied simply. "But it is so easy to be good; for I am sure to do right if I do exactly what my father wishes."

"Still, I think it must sometimes tire you to play so much on the piano."

"I do not play to amuse myself," said the child, "but to help my father."

"Do you know that if you go on playing you will some time or other be a great man?"

"I hope so," he replied. "When I am older I shall be able to compose operas—such *beautiful* operas! And then my father and mother will be happy. Oh, how glad they will be when they see their son crowned!"

"And will not you be happy also?"

"Oh yes," he replied. "When they are happy I shall be happy too."

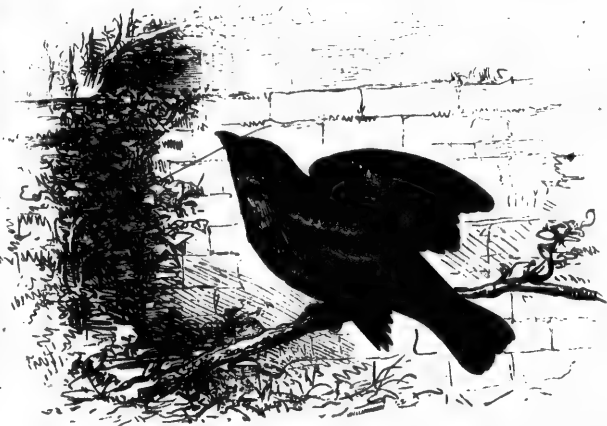
Shortly after this the company dispersed, but not until they had given the children more money than they had ever had before.

The following day they and their proud and happy father again set out on their travels. They went through France, Italy, England, and Germany. The children were everywhere admired, not only for their musical talents, but for their filial love; and many a time did their father thank God for having given him two such children.

When only fifteen years old, Wolfgang composed the opera of *Mithridate*, which he performed at Milan with unprecedented success. His childhood, however, was now over, and it was only of his childhood I promised to tell you. His after career you will learn from books. And remember, my children, that though you may not be able to copy his example as a great musician, you may copy it as an obedient and loving-hearted child.

STORIES ABOUT BIRDS.

THE HEDGE-SPARROW.



ALL young folks love birds ; and ' Please to tell me a story about them,' is an oft-repeated request. Now, this is just what we propose to do. You will find no hard words in these papers, and very little scientific information, but just a simple account of some of the well-known 'winged choristers of the grove,' as some poets call them. No doubt there are children who care so little about birds as to rob them of their young, or carry off their pretty eggs, for their selfish amusement ; but we hope none of the readers of

The Children's Hour would be so cruel, and it is for *them* we write.

The little bird I am now going to tell you about, is well

known to you all. It is 'the sparrow,'—not, however, the common house-sparrows which swarm by hundreds in the eaves of our houses, and crowds of which you startle as you walk along the streets, but the pretty little hedge-sparrow, with its maroon-coloured head and chin, and curious little black spots on each side of its neck. I rather think it looks down on its common cousins, and keeps aloof from them, loving to build its nest amongst the opening leaves of the green hedges, or sometimes in the midst of a thick canopy of ivy leaves.

The window of the room from which this paper is written looks out into a pleasant garden; and although it is in the suburbs of a large city, birds abound there, and in the neighbourhood; and in spring and early summer, one has only to close the eye, and listen to the full melodious singing, to feel wafted, in spirit, miles away from cities, to some real country abode in the midst of leafy woods.

The beautiful golden tresses of the laburnum trees, which over-canopy the garden gate, were just bursting into bloom, when, amongst the ivy which covers a wall close by, a couple of little hedge-sparrows were observed to be often out and in, looking very important and happy.

'There must surely be a nest there,' said a lady, who for some days had watched the movements of the little birds.

'A nest!' repeated a little girl of seven years old. 'Oh may I go and look for it? I'll go very quietly; please let me.'

Permission being granted, the child bounded off, and soon a shout of delight was heard, (the *quietly* quite forgotten.) 'I've found it! I've found it! Such a beauty too! and five eggs in it!—blue ones, just as blue as the sky!' And there, to be sure, canopied over by the young green ivy leaves, was the prettily-built nest of a hedge-sparrow.

The little birds had taken anything they could find to make their nest; and neatly woven in it were several

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pieces of scarlet wool, which the little girl recognised as being of the same colour as those which one of the ladies were working with: odds and ends had got blown out of the open window, which birdies must have pounced on, and carried off to smarten up their new abode. The hen bird, who had been sitting on her eggs, started off when the child's hand shook the leaves near in her search, and we feared that the fright might cause her to forsake the nest; but no, for after a short time the little bird flew past the window, just giving one shy glance to see if any one were there; and, pausing for a moment on the topmost spray of a yew-tree, it alighted on the ground, from which it looked all round, to make sure that no children with troublesome hands were near, then flew up, and nestled cosily down on the blue eggs. Days passed; many pairs of bright eyes were allowed to peep at the pretty eggs, when the parent birds were absent; and once the nest narrowly escaped being pulled to the ground by the plump hand of a baby girl of two years, who was lifted up by nurse just to get one peep of the blue eggs. Baby meant no harm—only wished to pull the nest a little nearer to herself to get a better peep.

Very patiently the hen bird sat on; and one morning, when laburnums, lilacs, hawthorns, and horse-chestnuts were in full beauty, the same little girl who had discovered the nest, came running in with the grand news that there were two wee birdies in it! Such funny little things, with naked bodies, and large gaping mouths! And after that day, I assure you, there were no more idle moments for the parents. All the eggs except one were hatched; and to supply four greedy little mouths with food is no easy task. By daylight the birds were astir, flying here and there, in order to obtain breakfast for their little ones, returning just to pop the food into the ever ready mouths, and then off again in search of more. Certainly little birds, as well as little children, should be very grateful to their parents for all the trouble they take for them.

Gradually the little ones became covered with feathers,

just like those of their parents ; and one day, when the spring flowers and early summer blossoms had all disappeared, the little girl went to have one more peep at her favourites ; but, as she gently touched the nest, out sprang first one, then another of the little birds, and before the child could recover from her surprise and astonishment, birdies were out of sight. Little Mary came in-doors quite sorrowful and cast-down, for it was thought the little ones were hardly ready for flight ; and she began to picture all manner of disasters as sure to befall them, when, lo and behold ! they were observed hopping about the garden. One of them was caught, and put back into the nest ; but having tasted the sweets of liberty, birdie would have nothing to say to his old home, and once more took flight.

For some days the little ones were seen hopping about the garden, carefully fed by their parents. But the nest under the ivy leaves was visited no more ; and whenever they were strong enough to get over the wall, they set off to see the world.

There are many more stories I could tell you about sparrows ; for, go where you like, you are pretty sure to meet with some of them. Writers on the Holy Land tell us they abound there, even as they did in the days when Jesus spoke of them as being sold five for a farthing, declaring that not one of them fell to the ground without the knowledge of the Father in heaven ; telling His people, old and young, that the very hairs of their head were numbered, and that surely the loving Father, who watched over the little birds, would much more take care of and protect them, who were of more value than many sparrows. They still congregate in the Holy Land by thousands in the fields and groves ; and one writer says, that if you were to leave your hat outside for a few hours, on going for it you would find a sparrow had built her nest there.

I wonder if any of my readers are sleepy-headed in the mornings ; and if so, whether they would like to be awoke

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by a couple of sparrows picking at their eyelids to make them open? Ah! that's impossible, you say. Pardon me, young reader folks. An old lady whom I used often to see, has told me of having had for several years two sparrows so tame as to eat out of her hand, sit on her shoulder, and fly about the room in all directions; and when she was longer than usual of awaking, she would sometimes feel a sharp prick on her eyelids, and starting up, find her little favourites thus to arouse her! They had no idea of people sleeping after the sun was up. No more, I am sure, had our little friends the hedge-sparrows in the town garden. Their song of praise was early sung; so should ours be also—

'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,
Early in the morning our songs shall rise to Thee.
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity.'

M. H.

THE SPIDER'S PARLOUR.

THERE is a little spider in Australia that might with great propriety ask the little to walk into his parlour; for he has a very neat little parlour, with a real door, that will open and shut on a hinge. I think there is no other animal besides man that can make a hinge. It seems wonderful that God has given this knowledge to a little insect which we commonly look down upon as among the most insignificant. There are none of His works that we can justly despise. 'All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord.'

A gentleman discovered one of these little underground spider-houses, and made the acquaintance of the owner, and came often to see him, so as to become acquainted with his habits. He brought him insects for his food every day, and made a certain tap on the door, which

the spider soon learned to understand. Then he would come up and push open the door, which was much like the lid of a box, and come out to get his breakfast. After he had received it, he walked back into his house, and shut down the lid very carefully. The inside was made of web and earth, and was as smooth as satin. He leaves his little door ajar at times; and when some silly, peeping insect comes peering around it for curiosity,

‘Up jumps the cunning spider,
And fiercely holds him fast.’

He does not take him *up*, but down, ‘his winding stair,’ and alas! ‘he never comes out again.’ But we must not blame the poor spider. It is the way God has given him to get his food; and it is no worse in him, than for us to eat the flesh of the gentle lambs and the pretty birds. They do not wish to be killed any more than the flies do. Your dear father is a far more dreadful creature to them than spiders are to flies. It is a great comfort to think that, when the one sharp pain of death is over, all these little creatures have no more remembrance of their troubles. They have no soul, as you have, that must live on for ever. Yet God takes care of each little life. Are you afraid, then, that He will ever forget you?—*Presbyterian.*

THE BIRTHDAY.

CHOICEST blessings on thee wait,
Here, and in a happier state!
May-flowers spring beneath thy feet,
May-birds chant a welcome sweet
To thy natal day!
Cloudless heavens smile above thee;
Gentle hearts that fondly love thee,
Simple offerings pay!

Needs no verse of mine to tell,
There are hearts that love thee well :
Needs no simple gift to show,
How those hearts with pleasure glow

On this happy morn,
When, to be a help and blessing,
Such endearing gifts possessing,
'Mother sweet' was born.

Every year increase thy love
For thy one best Friend above !
As each fleeting hour departs,
Closer round thy 'heart of hearts'
Heavenly hopes entwine !
Many a day like this returning,
See Faith's flame more brightly burning
On thy pure heart's shrine !

And may many a day like this
Shine upon our wedded bliss :
As we near the bright'ning goal,
Cling we closer soul to soul,
In those hallowed ties,
Which nor life nor death can sever,
Destined to endure for ever,
When from dust we rise !

F. W. H

THE FIREWOOD SELLER.

I Kings xix. 4.



THOUGHT of Elijah in the wilderness the other night. I saw the great prophet again; for human nature is the same in a great prophet as in a little hungry boy.

At nine o'clock on Saturday evening I heard pitiful subdued sobs and crying outside. I know the kind of thing that means some one fairly beaten. Not angry, not bitter,—smashed! I opened the front door, and found a little boy, ten years old, sitting on the steps crying. I asked him what was the matter. I see the thin, white, hungry, dirty little face. He would have slunk away if he could. He plainly thought his case beyond all mending. But I brought him in, and set him in a chair in the lobby; and he told his story.

He had a large bundle of sticks in a ragged sack—firewood. At three o'clock that afternoon he had come out to sell them. His mother was a poor washerwoman, in the most wretched part of the town. His father was killed a fortnight ago by falling from a scaffold. He had walked a long way through the streets—about three miles. He had tried all the afternoon to sell his sticks, but had sold only a halfpennyworth. He was lame, poor little man, from a sore leg, but managed to carry his heavy load; but at last, going down some poor area stair in the dark, he fell down a whole flight of steps, and hurt his sore leg so that he could not walk, and also got a great cut on his forehead. He had got just the halfpenny for his poor mother. He had been going about with his burden for six hours, with nothing to eat. But he turned his face homewards, carrying his sticks, and struggled on about a quarter of a mile, and then he broke down. He could go no farther. In the dark cold night he sat down

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and cried. It was not the crying of one who hoped to attract attention,—it was the crying of flat despair.

The first thing I did (which did not take a moment) was to thank God that my door-steps had been his juniper-tree. Then I remembered that the first thing God did when Elijah broke down, was to give him something to eat. Yes, it is a great thing to keep up physical nature. And the little man had had no food since three o'clock till nine. So there came, brought by kind hands (not mine), several great slices of bread and butter (jam even was added), and a cup of warm tea. The spirit began to come a little into the child, and he thought he could manage to get home if we would let him leave his sticks till Monday. We asked him what he would have got for his sticks if he had sold them all. Ninepence. Under the circumstances, it appeared that a profit of a hundred per cent. was not exorbitant; so he received eighteenpence, which he stowed away somewhere in his rags, and the sack went away, and returned with all the sticks emptied out. Finally, an old grey coat of rough tweed came, and was put upon the little boy, and carefully buttoned, forming a capital greatcoat. And forasmuch as his trowsers were most unusually ragged, a pair of such appeared, and being wrapped up, were placed in the sack, along with a good deal of bread and butter. How the heart of the child had by this time revived! He thought he could go home nicely. And having very briefly asked the Father of the fatherless to care for him, I beheld him limp away in the dark.—*From 'Autumn Holidays of a Country Parson.'*



LENDING TO THE LORD.

A TRUE INCIDENT.



POOR negro woman, after the death of her husband, had no means of support for herself and two little children, except the labour of her own hands; yet she found means, out of her deep poverty, to give something for the promotion of the cause of her Redeemer, and never failed to pay, on the very day it became due, her regular subscription to the church of which she was a member.

In a hard winter, she found a great difficulty in supplying the pressing needs of her little family; yet the few pence for religious purposes had been regularly put by. As one season for the contribution came round, she had only a little corn, a single salt herring, and a five cent piece remaining of her little store. Yet she did not waver. She ground the corn, prepared her little children's supper, and then, with a light heart and cheerful countenance, set out to service, where she gave joyfully the five cents,—the last she had in the world. Returning from the church, she passed the house of a lady, to whom, a long time before, she had sold a piece of pork—so long, indeed, that she had entirely forgotten the circumstances. But seeing her this evening, the lady called her in, apologized for having been so tardy in the settlement, and then inquired how much it was. The poor woman did not know; and the lady, determined to be on the safe side, gave her two dollars, besides directing her housekeeper to put a basket of flour, sugar, coffee, and other luxuries for her use. The poor woman returned home with a joyful heart, saying, as she displayed her treasures, "See, my children, the Lord is a good paymaster, giving us an hundredfold even in the present life, and in the world to come, everlasting life!"—*From 'Pivot Words of Scripture,' by Rev. P. B. Power.*



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‘THE PLANK BEARS’



SHIP was wrecked on the coast of Cornwall.

All hands went down excepting one sailor boy, who was washed on to the shore barely living, and who lay for weeks on a sick-bed.

He was visited by a young man, who strove to lead the sinking sailor lad to the cross of Christ as the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, in the storm which destroys both body and soul in hell.

‘Suppose,’ said the young man, ‘that when your vessel was in pieces round about you off the coast, and you felt yourself sinking exhausted beneath the surge,—suppose you had caught hold of a plank as it floated by you, and felt as you clutched it that it bore your weight, and held you up till relief could come, you would thank God for that plank, would you not?’

‘Yes, sir,’ gasped the boy; and he was made to understand that the plank was Christ, bearing up the spirit of the sinner amidst the tempest of wrath.

Many years rolled away, and the Christian missionary toiled on, miles and miles away from the southern coast. One day he was again in a sick-room. The sufferer was nearly gone. The visitor, true to his calling, bent down to whisper to the dying man about the great salvation, and the life after death.

‘Is it well with your spirit?’ he asked.

There was a sudden glance with the eye, that had begun to fix; the head turned round, and a flush covered the white face; then a smile—such a smile!

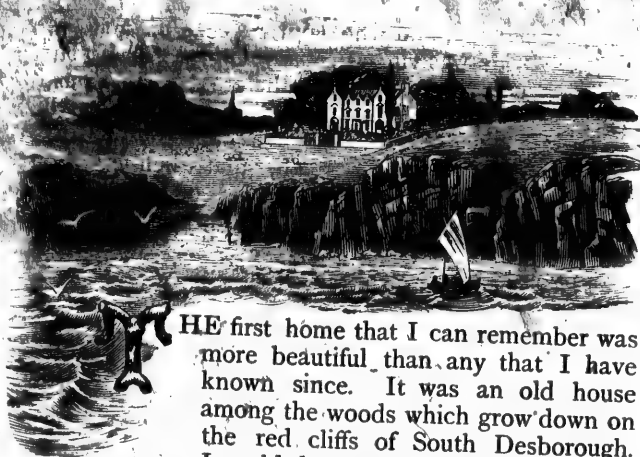
‘God bless you, sir! “*The plank bears, sir! The plank bears!*”’

And so it did. It had borne him ever since; and clinging to it, he got safe to land.—*From ‘Thy Day,’ by S. M. Haughton.*

'TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NO MAN.'

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'UNDER THE MICROSCOPE,' ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.



THE first home that I can remember was more beautiful than any that I have known since. It was an old house among the woods which grow down on the red cliffs of South Desborough. I could draw you a map of our garden now, although it is so long since we came away; of the grove round the house; of the rocky cove up which the sea came, sometimes quietly and politely, as if only for a morning call, and that the waves might have a chatter among the white pebbles, sometimes roughly and noisily, as if to let our sturdy sentinel rocks know pretty plainly that the rising tide would make its way up the long cove, whatever they might think upon the matter.

We were a large party in those days,—six brothers and sisters all at home; and of all ages and sexes,—from Fanny, of fourteen, to little Annette, of three. And I am now going to tell you the history of an expedition made by five of our number, with our governor, Miss Irwin, which became the grand story of the school-room and

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nursery from the time at which it took place, and is still repeated in nurseries in which the children of that day are papas and mammas now.

Hurrah for a day on the Farre Priory Sands, two miles off! Hurrah for a holiday! a pic-nic in the caverns, baskets of sea-weed, boxes of shells, climbing feats among the rocks, hide-and-seek in the caves, and marvellous exploits in jumping over the pools! We were to start early, take our dinner with us, and return before evening.

We had a regular course of preparations for expeditions like these. In the first place, there was always the entreaty, 'Please let us wear some old clothes that we needn't mind spoiling;' and I still have a remembrance of certain beloved brown holland frocks which faithfully refused to be spoilt, whatever might be said of their wearers, and which have the reward of being associated in my mind with pleasant days of blackberrying, sea-weed collecting, and wood exploring, such as never brown holland has seen brighter or merrier.

Then the basket was to be packed; and our good-natured cook nodded benignantly while little requests as to its contents were poured into her ears, requests which she was always willing to consider, generally going to the extent of smuggling in sundry compounds of her own suggestion, which came upon us with all the gratification of unlooked-for supplies. Lastly, the cry of 'Baskets! any baskets to-day,' was heard up and down the stairs and in and out of passages, as, from the grown-up members of the family, receptacles were supplicated, which, considering the possibility of their floating off—as happened more than once—for a cruise without an end in the waters of the English Channel, were, I ought gratefully to acknowledge, surrendered into our keeping with much benevolence by the owners thereof.

I wish all the children who read these pages could themselves spend a day as we did on the Farre Priory Sands.

In the first place, they were so beautiful; and whatever people may say about children not caring for the

beauties of nature, you and I know better. We children *do* care for lovely views and green country, and waving trees and dancing waves, no matter what may be said concerning our not understanding scenery. We can't paint them like our grown-up sisters and brothers, and perhaps we haven't a great many words for telling our thoughts about them; but down deep within us we feel the joy of being in a beautiful world; and, 'Isn't it lovely?' which is all the speech we can find, comes up to our lips from a great delight which God our heavenly Father has planted in our hearts, at the pleasant things of His bright world-parlour in which we dwell. Somewhere among old stores there still exists a copy-book, of which the paper must now be very yellow and the ink very brown, containing sundry early compositions in praise of nature in general, which my sisters and I compiled in solemn committee; and although they are not remarkable for their variety, I can yet remember the flood of joy in the green world of spring which found vent in the interesting lines—

'Lovely are the woods to-day:
Put all other thoughts away,
For it is the month of May!'

But besides the summer beauty of woods and waves, I cannot describe to you the thrill of delight with which, baskets in hand, we surveyed the wide reaches of sand, and the mysterious recesses of the rocks, and thought of all the hidden treasures which we might discover, and which might be ours, without any one to dispute the possession, if only our search should prove sufficiently fortunate.

My brothers were fond of the great sea-weed banners, which they would often bring home and hang up to tell them what the weather was to be; and we all coveted the queer little sea-purses which were plentifully found among the caves. But my special delight was in the pink and red sea-weeds, which seemed like delicate hot-house flowers among the commoner weeds in which they

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sometimes became entangled. I used to think they were like coral-plants, and wonder to myself from what great sea-flower land they had drifted into the little pools where the water was warm in the sunshine, and where our faces were reflected in our eager search for plunder.

But if the sea-weeds were lovely, how shall I describe the shells, cowries, spirals, little pink shells like the tips of fingers dyed with henna—for which fashion the eastern ladies have a fancy—tiny bivalves, so small as to seem like grains of sand? Were not these enough to fill us with delight, as, once let loose, we rushed backwards and forwards, washed our hands in the upcoming wave, tried who would be bravest and the last to retreat from its successor, cowered over red, purple, violet, and brown sea-anemones, and assured each other, as we slipped from the treacherous green-covered stones into the pools, that salt water never gave cold,—a very comforting reflection for all children who love the sea-shore, and who, as they do not pay for their own boots and shoes, are not always alive to the ruin that results to those articles of apparel after excursions such as ours?

But notwithstanding waves, shells, and sea-weed, we were not too happy to be hungry. On the contrary, I can assure you that Miss Irwin's suggestion that we should open the basket, was quite as effectual a call as the loudest dinner-bell; and we gathered together in front of the caves, fully prepared to do justice to Betsy's provisions.

But I have not told you about the caves; and yet to me they were the greatest pleasure of all. There were four or five large caverns, scooped out into wonderful shapes by the force of the waves, all with strange secret corners, and even hidden passages, sometimes leading into other caverns, that made me think of stories that I had read of robbers and banditti, while I tried to fancy them in abodes such as these. I had my own names for them. One was the church; another, the fairy palace; a third, the amphitheatre; and in and among them we used

to hide until we were tired : and then we used to come together and sing songs about the sea, which the sea-fairies, if only there were such things, ought to have taken as a compliment. I remember a verse of one of our songs which you may like to hear :—

‘When the red summer’s sun slowly sinks to his rest,
And his glory illumines the skies,
And the billows, reflecting the hues of the west,
Shine in purple and gold till he dies,
Then low to our ear do the light breezes bring,
The rise and the fall of the murmuring deep ;
Like a soft cradle-song which the waves seem to sing,
Whilst rocking the sunbeams to sleep.’

Yes ; I liked the caves the best of all. I liked to fancy what it would be to live in them ; what a strange life without lessons, and without servants, and with no necessity for the rules and regulations of a private house ! ‘Talk of furniture !’ I said to myself—‘of the new drawing-room curtains, and of the ornaments on the mantel-pieces, and of the Brussels carpets at home ;—why, is anything half so beautiful as the things the waves put up ; as the rock walls hung with sea-weed and tufted with sea-anemones, as the red and yellow sand on the floors, as the shelves of coloured stone, and the madreporé tables and stools, with the cool splash splash of the falling waters here, where it can never be too hot ?’

Of course these thoughts were not very wise ; and if my fancies had been really carried out, I should have begged hard once more for our nice house and comfortable chairs and tables, and for my own little white bed that was dry and snug, and much more suitable for going to sleep in than a couch of sea-weed and anemones. But you see I am telling you exactly what were some of my thoughts long years ago, in the red caves of the Priory Sands ; and I could tell you a great many more of them which were not any wiser, and which, therefore, I will keep to myself.

But it is time that I should return to the basket, which

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was opened in front of one of my dearly beloved caverns. In the first place, there were hard-boiled eggs, the shells of which my brothers made into drinking cups; and then there were sandwiches of bread and meat, which felt quite like going on a journey; and there was a cold cherry-tart and some cake, and a little bottle of raspberry vinegar, which Miss Irwin proposed that we should fill up with sea-water; and I think that was all, except a bottle of fresh water down at the bottom.

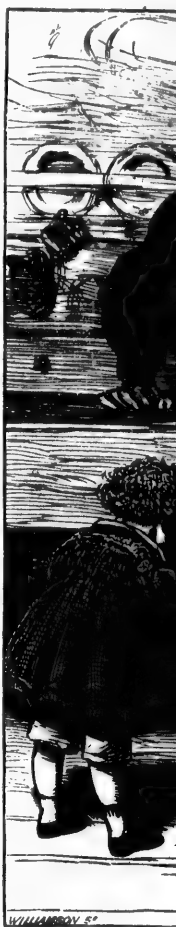
I don't know that we should have thought very much of our dinner if it had been served as usual on a table covered with a cloth, with a man-servant to change the plates, and a second course brought up on a tray, and arranged in due form. But it was quite another matter spread out on a rock, with three razor-shells placed round by Freddy instead of knives, and cockle-shells instead of wine-glasses, and long pieces of sea-weed solemnly folded as dinner-napkins; and we all thought Miss Irwin perfectly delightful when he spoke to him as if he were a real waiter, and said, 'Wash up the plates, Frederick, if you please!' Upon which he went to a pool on a great shelf of rock, which he called the sideboard, and carrying off our scallop-shell platters, restored them to us quite clean and ready for cherry-tart.

But it is time that I should go on to the events of the afternoon, which I may as well tell you constitute a substantially true story; for, I dare say, you feel as I do, that made-up adventures are very stupid, and often wonder that people should take the trouble to manufacture them when a real history of their own doings would be much more amusing.

After dinner, we played together, and found more shells; and Mary and I laid down on a dry rock, and resting our faces on our elbows, leant forward and looked into a deep pool of water that had a sort of fairy scenery inside, made up of shaded sea-weeds and coloured sand, and wished that we were very small and wee, indeed—smaller than Tom Thumb—that we might dive down into

it, and find the sea-weeds woods to us, and the stones hills,—some more foolish notions, which yet you may have had too, or would perhaps have had, if you had been with us on the Farre Priory Sands that summer's afternoon.

I even now cannot make out what, during all this time, became of Miss Irwin. My brothers were jumping over streams which come down from the land to the sea-shore, and Mary and I were making up our fairy story, and Fanny was with her back to us sorting shells in a little card-box with many partitions; and it so happened that we all three were high up and out of sight of the low-lying sand along which lay our way home. My own private belief concerning Miss Irwin during the period of our after-dinner occupations, which remains unchanged, although I would not have you mention it should you meet her, is that she went to sleep in a sheltered sort of stone arm-chair among the rocks not far off from our pool. She herself never allowed more, when asked the question, than that she might have closed her eyes for a minute or two; but it was more than a minute or two, and more than an hour after, that, at the same moment that we heard the boys calling out, 'Miss Irwin, Fanny, you'd better make haste!' her voice sounded beside us with a placid 'Come, dears, we must be thinking of going home.'



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BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE LITTLE CAPTAIN,' 'MISS MATTY,'
ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER II.



THE early life of little Alf flowed on like a gently running stream at the cottage on the cliff. What a difference he made in the hitherto quiet household! how cheery it made Dolly feel to have a child trotting about once more, though she was kept in a constant terror too, lest he should tumble over the rocks or hurt himself in some way! Old Ned for a time was somewhat put out when he cried for things Dolly did not consider good for him, and would fain have given him all his own way, rather than see the blue eyes dim with tears; but with these slight drawbacks, Alf was a never-failing source of amusement, and his childish ways were a perfect wonder to the old man. It gladdened Dolly's heart too, to find that, though such a young child, Alf had evidently been taught to say his prayers; and when she had questioned him, to see how far his knowledge extended, he had, at the name of Jesus, pointed at once to the sky, saying as he did so, 'Up 'ere, Jesus see Alf's bad boy; but me good boy, ganma?' Whereupon Dolly pressed him to her heart, declaring that, of course, he was good, that there wasn't a better child in the whole wide world.

Alf was a particularly clever child, with a mind ever on the stretch after knowledge. From morning to night he was never done asking questions, and Ned found it no easy task to explain everything he wanted to know.

'I do declare that boy has a pair of eyes at the back

of his head, missus,' said Ned one day, as he came in rubbing his grizzled hair in a perplexed way. 'I've had the wind completely knocked out o' me, I have; nothing escapes his sharp eyes; and,' he continued, throwing himself into a chair, 'only think what he has been a-asking of me just now. Why, he wants me to tell him this, why it is that the sea heaves and pitches,—jumps up and down, he calls it.'

'And what did you say, Ned?' said Dolly, smiling at her husband's confused face.

'Say? I didn't say anything; I just turned on my heel and left him staring at the waves with all his might, as if he expected to see something walk out of it. I wish his godfather, Captain Chunch, had been here; he'd have knowed how to answer him.'

But Ned's happiest moment was when Jack Sprott, or any of his old messmates, came up to his cottage, perhaps of a Sunday afternoon, to smoke a pipe with him; then little Alf's cleverness was duly paraded before the visitor. He had been taught by Dolly to repeat, 'How doth the little busy bee,' and every one who entered the cottage had to sit and hear him say it, till Dolly began to fear she had done wrong in teaching him, for she feared the praise that was constantly being showered upon him would completely spoil him altogether.

'Come along, my lad,' Ned would say, with a grin spreading over his wrinkled old face. 'Give us that 'ere hymn your granmar has taught you. Come now, stand forward like a man; head up, hands down, make your best bow to the company, and away she goes.'

Little Alf would then step out as desired, and having tugged one of his curls and scraped his foot behind, in true nautical style, he would repeat the hymn as demurely as a little judge, Ned joining in the last line, or slowly repeating the last word, as he had been accustomed to do in the fore-castle at sea, when the songs had been sung.

But it was not all sunshine either with the little foundling; for there came a time of sadness and distress to

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Hurstcliff, when many little children were seized with scarlet fever, and the very last to take it was little Alf. How dreary it seemed to Ned to return from a long patrol along the coast, to find the boy lying in his cot moaning and ill, and scarcely conscious of their presence! How he missed the little face at the corner of the garden, waiting his coming, and the sound of his merry voice as he rushed back to the house to announce to Dolly that 'Granpa was coming!' Ned was a good man in his way, but he did not distinctly realize that a kind providence watched over all; and from the first he felt convinced that Alf would die.

'Ned; my man,' Dolly would say, the tears standing in her honest grey eyes, 'you must put yer trust in the gréat Creator. I do believe, if the Lord sees fit, He will spare his young life.'

'Ay, if He sees fit; but He won't, missus. No, I sees clearly this 'ere child, that was making our house so pleasant with his cheery ways, will be took from us too, just as our own little lad was. I wish I had left him in the sea, I do,' said Ned gloomily.

But little Alf lived. Even after the doctor had given up all hopes of him he rallied, and once more there was happiness in the cottage. During his illness, Dolly had been greatly comforted by the frequent visits of Mrs. Dartmor, the vicar's wife. Her own children had been amongst the first to take the fever, but had now recovered. She was a gentle lady, kind to the poor, and always ready to soften off any unpleasantness that might arise from her husband's peculiar temper; therefore, being well aware of the slight feud that had arisen between Mr. Dartmor and Ned about Alf, she had never failed to take a warm interest in him, and many toys and pretty playthings, along with other and more substantial tokens of kindness, found their way to the cottage. Ned could not help feeling a little jealous of Mrs. Dartmor, notwithstanding he had a great respect for her; but it vexed him, more than he cared to own, even to himself, to see that Alf's head lay easier

when she arranged his pillows, and that no one could get him to take his medicine so well as she could do. The truth was, little Alf was becoming to Ned a sort of idol; and there was no doubt, if he loved the boy before his illness, he did so after a thousandfold more. So, with many kind faces bending over him, and loving hands to minister to his wants, little Alf recovered, and was soon able to be carried in Ned's strong arms, and laid on soft cushions in the little arbour in the garden, where he could lie and look at the sea, and watch the small craft sailing out and in of the little harbour. And, after all fear of infection was gone, some of the little children from the village would come to pay him a visit, bringing with them bunches of wild-flowers or fruit gathered from the plantation close by Hurstcliff. At first Alf's little visitors were rather afraid to venture near in case of meeting gruff old Ned, and they would creep cautiously round the rocks, watching for him to go away to the station, as he did daily; then, when he was safely out of sight, they would come stealing up to the boy with their little offerings. From the first he had been quite a little hero in their eyes, for he had come amongst them in such a strange way, that they had still a sort of feeling of awe about him, as if he were something of a fairy child,—a being to be looked at and loved, but not to be treated as if he were an ordinary boy at all.

On one occasion, Ned had come back very unexpectedly, and surprised the little group seated on the green, with Alf laughing and chattering like a parrot in the midst, and appearing to be in a state of great delight in their society. But no sooner did Ned make his appearance when a general rush was made to escape, which, however, was made impossible by Ned's bulky figure blocking up the doorway; they were therefore compelled to stay, though trembling at his dreaded presence. Ned laughed heartily at the uproar he had caused; and now that they had come into such close contact with him, he did not seem to be so very dreadful

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after all, especially, too, as little Alf showed the very opposite of fear, using all sorts of freedoms with his adopted grandfather, so that very soon Ned became a great favourite, and might be seen frequently surrounded by a group of youthful faces, watching him with much interest as he shaped out tiny boats or rigged miniature ships for them, which few could do so well as he.

Alf had been rather a delicate child before his illness, and his pale face made many suppose he must have come from some hot climate; but after the fever it was astonishing how fast and how strong he grew, so that, before he had been a year at the cottage, Ned had to think seriously of his education. It proved to be as difficult a question as his name had been, and not so easily answered; for Captain Chunk could give him no advice, he having gone on a longer trip than usual, and was not expected back for some weeks. Dolly innocently proposed sending him to the village school; but with a grunt and a growl, Ned had said, 'What! send such a lad amongst common children, missus? No, that he sha'n't. I can't see my way clear at this 'ere moment; but I've been athinking we might get a lady to come here and give him his book larning like a gentleman, as the young woman does up at the parsonage.'

Dolly was struck almost dumb for a moment at the grandeur of the notion, and was only able to reply, in a faint whisper, that it would take 'a power of money to do that.' But Ned promptly replied, 'I've been athinking of that, missus; this knowledge-box has been very full o' thoughts, and I *almost* see my way. I'll stop my grog and beer at the tavern, and put it in the locker instead; and if that aint enough, I'll stop my 'bacca,' and Ned stalked off with the air of a conqueror.

When Dolly began to think the matter over, she became quite frightened, and, unknown to her husband, resolved to tell Mrs. Dartmor, though she knew quite well Ned wanted no assistance from that quarter.

'Oh, ma'am, what could I do with a lady in my bit

of a cottage?' Dolly had said, shuddering at the mere thought. 'My man Ned wants to be a good steward to the boy, ma'am, for he fancies his parents are gentlefolks, and that they will be coming some day to claim him; and he's afeard they'll not want to own him if he's not educated; but for that matter, he's such a dear child, that if he had no learning at all, I can't think that any mother would not love him.'

Mrs. Dartmor promised to do her best; and one day meeting Ned all alone on the beach, she talked it over with him, proposing to allow the boy to be taught in her own nursery, along with her two little girls, Ada and Madge. Ned had set his heart, however, on saving the money that he spent weekly on beer for the education of his adopted child, and having got this notion, it was not easy to drive it out again.

'Well, Gaskin, I'll tell you how we will manage,' said Mrs. Dartmor, smiling. 'You can save the money all the same, and at the end you can buy something as a present to Miss Moore, or keep it to send the boy to a good school when he is a little older. But won't you miss your beer, Ned?'

'Well, it's likely, ma'am, I will a bit at first; but I'd do a deal for the little lad. I'd even give up my pipe, if need be; but I'd miss it most dreadful, I would, for I've been a smoker ever since I was a boy. But for the youngster's sake I'll stop my 'bacca, or go on short commons, whatever it costs me.'

But Mrs. Dartmor assured him that 'the grog money' would be quite sufficient; and she did not fail to notice that Ned sighed heavily, as if a load had been lifted off his mind. And so it turned out that little Alf was sent to the parsonage every morning to receive his education, where some of the happiest days of his early boyhood were spent.

Ada and Madge were delighted with their new companion, for their brother Frank now received his lessons from his papa in the study, and they felt rather dull without him. As for Frank, he had been very anxious to be promoted to this position, for, being nine years old, he

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thought it babyish to be taught along with 'the children ;' but before many days had elapsed, he was wishing he was back again in his old place by the schoolroom window. His father might be a much better teacher—Frank had no doubt he was ; but one thing he was perfectly sure about, that was, that he was not nearly so pleasant as Miss Moore. The hard lessons in the study, however, made the Wednesday half-holiday all the more delightful ; and, somehow or other, Frank always found himself waiting at the schoolroom door for his sisters, now that Alf was there. Though Frank was nearly three years older, Alf was such an active, lively little fellow, that he did not make such a bad companion. Away along the coast there was a cave that the children were never tired of exploring, and mostly every Wednesday, if the weather was at all favourable, they paid a visit to it, with Miss Moore in close attendance. The cave had been the hiding-place of smugglers in days gone by, and on that account it had a peculiar charm for Frank, who knew every legend connected with it. When the children were tired of gathering shells, or building houses on the sand, they would seat themselves round a flat stone that they called their table, at the entrance of the 'Smugglers' Grotto,' and while engaged, with youthful appetites, upon the good things kind Mrs. Dartmor never failed to supply for them, Frank would repeat his stories—sometimes frightful ones enough—till the little girls would be so horrified that they would declare they never could come back any more ; but the next holiday would find them there again, it being the favourite resort of the boys, and they would scarcely ever agree to go anywhere else.

'Oh, Alf !' Madge had said on one occasion, Frank's last story having been more horrible than usual, 'how *can* you ever want to go again ? Only think of those bad men putting a light on the rocks to make the sailors think it was the harbour, and all the time it was to make them put the ship wrong, so that they might be drowned, and these wicked men could then take all their things !'

'When I'm a man, I'll buy a big boat, and go and kill all the pirates, and all the bad men that put lights on the rocks,' said Alf, in such a determined way, that little gentle-hearted Madge was quite frightened for a moment, and hastened to reply:

'Alfy, dear, don't; you mustn't want to kill men. You must never say such dreadful things again;' and then, with her soft plump arm round his neck, she continued, 'We won't go to the cave any more, we'll only go to the harbour to see the boats, Alf.'

But Alf would not listen to Madge, and paid no attention to her coaxing ways, and stoutly declared his intention was to go to the cave that very minute, and nowhere else. Thus a love of the adventurous took strong hold of little Alf, and grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength, and Frank Dartmor unconsciously fed the flame from time to time in the Smugglers' Grotto.

Mr. Dartmor, though he had not at first approved of Alf's coming to the vicarage, began to take an interest in him. He could not shut his ears altogether, so that he was constantly hearing of the boy's cleverness; and occasionally, when he passed the open schoolroom door, and saw the fair curly head bent low over his book, and the young face wearing such an eager expression, if no one happened to be within sight, he would walk in and pat him kindly on the shoulder. When Ned had been told of this, he chuckled greatly, and shook his head, as he said to his wife: 'Ay, parson can't help seeing our boy has something in him—that he's a lad worth taking notice o'. If he asked him now about his larning, he'd astonish him, he would. Why, Jack Sprott's boy, that's half as old again, can't read nigh so well; and for that matter, there aint one in the whole village can come near him.'

But Mr. Dartmor came round even further. It happened in this way: Ada, who was now eight years old, being a year older than Alf, was apt occasionally to be rather domineering to little Madge, and it vexed him greatly when she was oppressed in any way; and as he grew older,

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he boldly took her part, and defended her rights. Madge had a little kitten that she dearly loved; and one day, when Miss Moore was out of the room, pussy came frisking in, little knowing what a commotion her entrance would cause. Ada, when she saw the kitten, jumped down and caught it; but puss, not liking her freedom taken from her in such an abrupt way, scratched her captor very severely on the arm. Ada's temper was up in a moment. She dashed the kitten furiously down; but puss did not seem to have felt the rough treatment, or to be sorry in the least for what she had done, which enraged Ada so much, that she hunted her round the room to inflict further punishment. Madge entreated her to spare it, but Ada would not listen. 'Nasty beast! I'll knock its head off. I'll teach it to scratch me;' and creeping under the table where the kitten had retreated, she managed to get hold of it once more.

Alf, who had just come in for the afternoon lessons, saw at once that Ada was 'in one of her tempers,' as Frank called it, and that his favourite playmate and friend was in sore distress. No sooner did he understand what was the matter, than he at once flew to rescue the kitten, which, after a good deal of struggling, he succeeded in doing. But Ada had lost all control over herself, for the kitten had given her several fresh scratches, and the pain was severe. She stood and stared at Alf for a moment; then, stamping her foot, her passion broke out anew, uttering words that changed the current of little Alf's hitherto peaceful life:

'Oh, you nasty boy! how dare you interfere with me?' she cried; then coming closer, she continued, 'You are nothing but a pauper. Old Ned is not your grandfather. If he hadn't taken you in, you would have had no home; you would have had no clothes, only rags to wear. I wouldn't be you for—'

What more she would have said, it is impossible to say; but Alf, turning a scared face towards Madge, rushed out of the room, and with his cap or outercoat,

he ran wildly down the avenue, and never paused till he had hidden himself in the smugglers' cave. Though Alf knew he had been picked up out of the sea, he somehow had never doubted that Ned Gaskin was his real grandfather. He had been so happy, that he had never had cause to trouble himself about the subject; but now, sitting on the ground, with the dim lights and shadows of the grotto round him, and the sea moaning pitifully in his ear, little Alf realized his true position. The rising tide came bursting and bubbling to his feet; the breeze came stronger, and the spray dashed itself over him; yet still he sat, finding a vague consolation from the ocean. It was from the sea he had come, and the sea alone could tell him what he wanted, for the old man had, at various times, evinced a decided unwillingness to satisfy his curiosity on this point, the truth being, of course, that Ned knew so little himself. It was to the sea therefore that Alf's young fancy now turned, with a growing determination to discover something of his own origin and his rights.

After Alf was gone, Ada stood bewildered at the effect of her words. Little Madge was almost as stupefied; but the remembrance of her playmate's white face made her feel that something must be done, for a great fear had taken possession of her, that Alf would run away and never be heard of more. She hastened to her papa's study, and as well as her sobs and tears would allow, she told her story. Mr. Dartmor at once sent down to the cottage to see if the boy had gone home, but he was not there; and in a few minutes more—it was marvellous how the news spread—the whole of the fishermen and sailors from the bay knew that something had happened to the boy, who was a general favourite with every one. A few came up to the vicarage to offer their services to go in search of him; no easy matter, for no one knew in what direction he had gone. Frank, however, was of great service. He had just been reading Cooper's well-known Indian stories, and was delighted at the thought of putting his knowledge

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of war-trails into practice. Having carefully surveyed the ground, which had been soft for some time, he came upon the mark of a small footstep outside the vicarage, pointing towards the beach, and giving out that he fancied a regular war-whoop, he called out to the youthful part of the company, who had assembled in great numbers, 'Follow me, boys, I've found his trail.'

The boys joined eagerly in the hunt, while the old men followed more slowly. Getting his band of volunteers into the proper Indian file, and the usual step adopted by those savage warriors, and having cautioned them to strict silence, Frank led on with almost unerring correctness towards the sea-side cove where the grotto lay. Here they at once discovered the object of their quest, scrambling up the rocks to reach the road above. Frank felt a little indignant that Alf should think of returning home at all; it would have pleased him much better if the boy had showed some signs of staying away altogether; if he had only been engaged in attempting to light a fire, or gathering the dry sea-weed for a bed, it would have raised him tenfold in Frank's estimation. But as yet, whatever he might feel afterwards, Alf had not come up to Frank in his love of adventure.

Very glad were Dolly and Ned to have the boy once more again under their humble roof. They would not believe that he had been in no danger, but treated him as if he had been rescued from some untimely fate. From that time it may be said Alf's childhood came to an end. He would go no more to the vicarage, but would sit moodily at home, as if all the spirit had been knocked out of him. Mr. and Mrs. Dartmor were very much distressed to think that one of their children should have behaved in such a manner. The vicar went himself to the cottage to see Alf, and was so kind and courteous to Ned, and actually of his own accord he proposed to take the boy and instruct him along with his own son.

'I always knew,' said Dolly, triumphantly, after Mr. Dartmor was gone, 'that the parson had a deal of kindly



longs to meet his dear little son. He

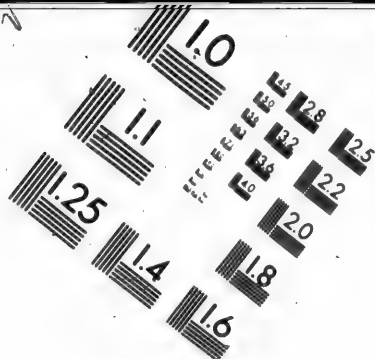
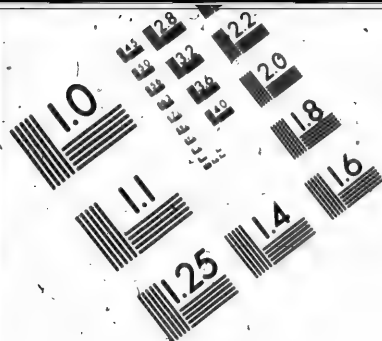
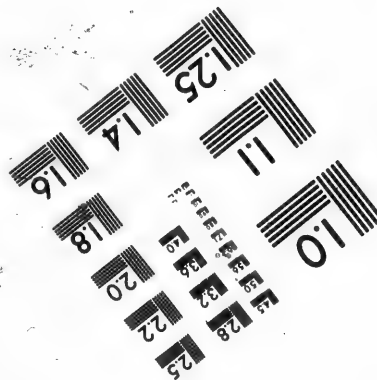
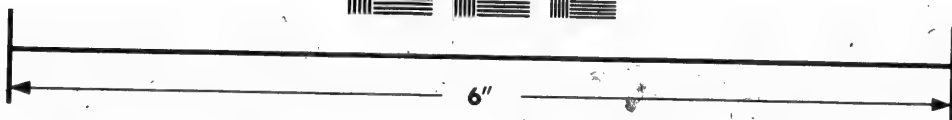
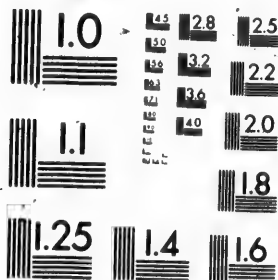


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feeling about him. I'm sure I've said it often afore now, Ned.'

'Ay, ay, missus, that you have, and maybe after all you're right. He's been most uncommon kind anyhow about this here business; so I axes his pardon for what I've said against him in the past. And now, my lad,' he continued, turning to Alf, 'you're to be under the parson's own eye; ye're to mind that whatever he says is right; ye're to look to him alays, and obey him in everything; for he's to be like ye're real commandyer for the present time.'

I AM GOING ON BEFORE.

'Don't cry, mother! I'm going to heaven; but I'll wait for you at the gate.'—'Our School,' in *Our Own Fireside*.

'I am going on before, mother,
To our dear heavenly home;
But when I reach the door, mother,
I'll stay until you come.'

'You'll see me at the gate, mother,
You know there is but one;
And you'll not make me wait, mother:
Your work is almost done.'

'I think that I could rest, mother,
If you would let me lie
On your warm, loving breast, mother,
And sing your lullaby.'

She sang a low, sweet song;
He slept, to wake again
Where angel harps prolong
The dear, familiar strain.

F. W. H.

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STORIES ABOUT BIRDS.

THE SWALLOW.



GRACEFUL little bird ! with the deep, glossy blue wings and head, pure white breast, short legs (feathered to the very toes), and forked tail : how well my young readers know it, and love to hear its twittering note, and watch its rapid flight through the air, as with open mouth it pursues and swallows the insects within its reach !

There are several species of the family in this country ; but the one I am going to tell you about belongs to the tribe with whose nest, built under the eaves of our houses, you are all well acquainted, and which, properly speaking, is called 'the house martin.' How curious their roof-covered homes are ! their one end stuck so firmly on the wall close to our windows, as if to

allow the little birds to watch our proceedings! Dearly did one little boy I knew love to watch a pair of martins, as they flew out and in of a nest which was just outside the window of his schoolroom, in a beautiful country home. Often, *too* often, was his head lifted from the book he held in his hand, to take one sly peep at his busy little friends; and once, when reproved for a badly-said lesson, he confessed that the time which should have been spent in learning it, had been devoted to counting how many times, in the course of half an hour, the parent birds flew out and in with food to their young ones; an interesting occupation, had it been play instead of lesson time. Don't you think he had forgotten, that

'One thing at a time, and that done well,
Is a very good rule, as many can tell!'

Ah, well! the little boy is a man now, busily employed in an eastern country; but I am sure he will remember the old schoolroom, and the swallow's nest.

What clever builders these little birds are! constructing the outer part or shell of their nests (composed of mud tempered with straw) early in the morning, so that it may be hardened during the day; and then lining the inside with soft feathers, different kinds of grass, and a little straw, ready to receive the pure white eggs. There are many curious stories about swallows, showing their fondness for their young, and their cleverness in overcoming difficulties. As an instance of the latter quality, a lady has sent me the following anecdote, of which she was herself a witness:

A swallow's nest having fallen to the ground (caused by the opening of a window from the top, to which a portion of the nest had been fixed), three little ones were found in it. They were unhurt; and a little boy put them carefully into an empty nest which had belonged to a sparrow, then placed them in a basket which was drawn up by strings, and fastened outside the window, nearly in the same place as their nest had been.

Presently the parent birds were seen flying round, twittering loudly, as if to express their surprise at the state of matters ; but on hearing the chirp chirp of the hungry and frightened little ones, they ere long began to feed them, and continued to do so undaunted by the strange change ; but, for all that, they were not satisfied. Little swallows were never intended to live in a sparrow's nest, which was not nearly so snug a dwelling as the one they were accustomed to ; and really the nights were sometimes cold enough ; something must be done. Human beings might think that nest in the basket good enough ; but *they* knew better. So, setting busily to work, they constructed a roof of mud and straw over the basket ; and there their young family flourished. Now, little readers, were they not a pair of clever birds ?

Swallows have always been favourites with mankind ; perhaps the very fact of their showing confidence in us, by building their nests so near us, may have endeared them to us, and given rise to the superstition, that it is bad luck to pull down a swallow's nest. In America, these little birds are also great favourites ; and some tribes of the wild Indians love so much to have them build near them, that they hollow out gourds and fasten them to trees near their cabins, in hopes that they will make their nest there, which they often do. Many strange stories have been told of the places where some of the swallow tribe have been known to build. A well-known naturalist, the Rev. G. White, tells of a pair of swallows who built their nest on the wings and body of a dead owl, which was hung outside of a barn ! A gentleman, amused at the strange sight, made a large shell be put up in the place where the owl had been ; and the next year the same pair of swallows built in it and brought up their family there ; but I don't think these were our friends the house martins.

I have heard of people being so cruel as to keep swallows in cages for their own amusement ; and one writer tells us, that in Paris he has seen cages full of these

birds carried along the streets for sale ; and he remarked with pleasure, that several people stopped and bought them, in order to have a right to open their prison doors and set them free.

The swallows only remain with us a few months in the year, being what are called migratory birds,—that is to say, when the autumn winds begin to blow, and the trees are dropping their summer foliage, the swallows, led by their God-given instinct, meet together, and often at night fly off to warmer lands, coming back with the balmy southern breeze to their old homes under our eaves, to enliven us with their eager twittering. A sweet poetess has pictured them as observing the various changes which have taken place in our homes whilst they were away, missing the bright young faces and merry voices of some, who, during their absence, have been laid low in death. No doubt this is all fancy ; but I am sure my young readers have often thought that the swallows *did* really know them, and recognise them in their yearly visits. Is it not truly marvellous how these little birds are able to perform their long journeys over land and sea ? Surely, were it not for the guiding, protecting hand of the loving God, who taketh care of all the creatures He hath made, they would never be able to overcome the many dangers they must encounter in their long flight. The swallow is mentioned in Scripture ; and in Jeremiah viii. 7, the prophet draws an humbling contrast between the obedience of the little bird to the instinct implanted in its breast by the great Creator, and the disobedience of so many of the children of men to His revealed will. Good reason had our Saviour for bidding us ‘Consider the fowls of the air,’ for many a lesson of calm trust in the care and love of our heavenly Father we may learn from them ; and are they not pleasant teachers ? But now we must bid our summer friend, the swallow, farewell,—even as it has already bid us,—for this dreary autumn month finds it basking in sunnier climes, ‘midst myrtle and orange groves. Well for us that all our friends do not leave us in dark days,

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for not yet have we reached the land of perpetual summer,
where the sun shall go down no more ; but till then

'We know that He who o'er the sea
Hath been the swallow's guide,
Will much more hear His children dear,
And for their wants provide.'

M. H.

ALICE AND FANNY,

OR

DISOBEDIENCE PUNISHED.



FO little girls were playing one lovely summer day in a beautiful garden. Their names were Alice and Fanny, and they were sisters. Alice was in her eleventh year, and Fanny just nine. They were unlike each other in appearance and disposition. Alice was tall and slender, with a thoughtful, though not by any means sad expression of countenance ; she had dark eyes, and dark hair. Fanny was full of fun and frolic ; her laughing blue eyes showed her merry disposition. She tossed back her auburn curls as she bounded with childish glee down the gravel walk, saying, as she did so, to her little dog, 'Come, Frolic, you and I will have a race.'

Now it so happened, that at the foot of this same gravel walk there was a small wicket gate opening into a meadow, in which there was a well. Mrs. Malcolm persuaded her husband to keep this gate locked, fearing an accident might some day happen to her darling children. For years the lock was on the gate, save when any one was passing from the meadow to the garden ; but Mr. Malcolm, finding it most inconvenient to keep it locked,

said one day to his wife, 'Maria, I think, if you caution Alice and Fanny, we may remove the lock from the wicket gate. We have so endeavoured, with God's help, to enforce obedience to our commands, that I think there can be no danger, provided we positively forbid either of them ever to open the gate.'

'My dear,' replied his wife, 'if you think of removing the lock, I will call the children, and we will tell them they must never open the gate unless you or I are with them.'

'Very well, Maria, do so;' and Mrs. Malcolm, leaving the room, soon reappeared with her little girls.

'Come here, my dears,' said Mr. Malcolm: 'I am going to give orders this morning that the wicket gate in the garden shall be left unlocked; but before doing so, I wish to tell both of you, that it is your mamma's and my *express command* that neither of you shall ever open that gate, or if you find it open, you are not on any account to go into the meadow, *unless* either your mamma or myself should be with you. You have my free and full consent to play in any other place you please; but remember, I positively forbid you to go into that meadow; and as I feel thankful to own my little girls are *obedient* children, I have no fear of failure in this case, if they ask God to help them.'

Both Alice and Fanny said they never would open or pass through the gate. We shall see if either of them became a promise-breaker.

When Fanny and Frolic had reached the end of the walk, the former saw the gate open; the sun was shining brightly, and the green grass on the meadow looked so cool and refreshing, with the white and pink daisies peeping up here and there, and the bank so full of beautiful primroses and violets, Fanny's favourite flowers. Frolic stopped, waiting for orders from his young mistress, yet full of eagerness to have a run round the beautiful meadows. Fanny stopped too. Ah! my reader, Satan was very busy at that moment tempting that dear child. He suggested the harmlessness of taking *one race* round

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the meadow, and told her she need not go near the well, and what other danger could there be? But a voice whispered in her ear—it was the voice of conscience—'Children, obey your parents.' Again Satan endeavours to drown the voice of conscience, by telling her she might gratify her wish, and no one would know she had been in, for it was dinner hour, and the men had all left their work, and her papa and mamma were engaged, so that, unless Alice came after her, she might take a race, and no one be the wiser. Oh! Fanny, you are sinking fast into Satan's snare. Why stand wavering? Why not silence the tempter by the weapon of prayer? Could you not offer the well-known petition, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil?' How much you resemble your first parent Eve! In like manner she parleyed with the tempter until he gained the victory, and she ate of the forbidden fruit, and gave unto her husband and he did eat—thus bringing sin and sorrow into this fair world, and causing death to come, and oftentimes rob us of our dearest treasures. My young readers, if you ever feel tempted to do wrong, I advise you to be decided; do not stand wavering, as it were, balancing the for and against of the step you are going to take. If conscience says '*you are right*,' then go and do what is right *at once*; and if it whispers, '*you are wrong*,' then avoid the snare of the evil one, and resist him with the words, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'

I am sorry to say, Fanny did not ask God's help in the present case; she leaned to her own understanding; she thought of what she would *like best*, not of what would be right in God's sight, and pleasing in His eyes, and so she fell.

'Come, Frolic, you and I will have just one race in the meadow, and then home; papa or mamma will never know.'

Oh! Fanny, can it be possible? Are you adding deceit to disobedience? But 'be sure your sin will find you out.' Fanny was not permitted to *enjoy* her race.

Mr. Malcolm had given instructions to his steward to have 'snakes' set in the field, and, of course, a signboard to be put up to warn persons of the danger. Now Fanny was totally ignorant of the 'snakes' being in the field, and had only gone a few yards, when she found something sharp under her foot, which hurt her very much, and tumbled her over. She attempted to rise, but was unable to do so, the pain of her ankle was so severe. 'Oh dear!' she said, bursting into tears, 'what shall I do? How foolish I was to come into the meadow,—how I wish I had never entered it!' Again she tried to walk; but every moment the pain and swelling were increasing, and she felt altogether helpless. She sobbed most bitterly, but no one heard her. Alice had returned to the house, and the men were all at their dinner. Half an hour passed, and oh! the bitter, bitter remorse she suffered during that half hour. The pain of her ankle was nothing to the agony of her mind, as she saw her sin in all its enormity.

At last old Roger came up the road, past the far end of the meadow, and thinking he heard a sob, he stopped to listen. 'Yes, surely,' he said to himself, 'some one is in sorrow,' and old Roger was never the one to mind his work, if he could relieve a fellow-creature's distress. 'I'll go up a bit and see if I can hear more.' He went on a few steps, and then heard distinctly the voice of his master's little daughter, crying in heart-broken accents, 'Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do?' He threw down his spade in the meadow, and hastened over the bank to the spot from whence he heard the sound of weeping.

'Oh, Miss Fanny, what is wrong with you? Tell old Roger, and he'll soon help you.'

'Is that you, Roger? Papa told me never to come into this meadow, and I promised I never would; but it looked so beautiful to-day, and the gate was lying open, and so—and so—I—came—in.'

'Ah! I see it all, I see it all,' replied old Roger. 'You have been a disobedient young lady, and one of them

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there "snakes" has tripped you over. But come now, and I'll soon carry you home, and you'll just have to make a clean breast of it, and ask to be forgiven. But mind, Miss Fanny, what I tell you. There's no good comes from disobedience, for the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in all things."

"Roger, I am a very wicked little girl; please do not lift me until you tell me one thing. Did your little granddaughter ever do what you and her father and mother forbid her doing?"

"Well, my dear, I cannot stop now to tell you; I have the master's work to mind, and when he pays me for it, sure my time belongs to him; but, please God, some wet day I'll ask him to let me go up to the hall, to tell you and Miss Alice the story of my sweet little grandchild. But come now, miss, put your arm round me, and we'll soon have you safe in your mamma's care;" and gently the poor old man lifted the wayward erring girl in his stout arms, and brought her home, where she had to confess her sin with sorrow and shame.

With aching hearts, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm listened to their child's tale of disobedience, and together they knelt to thank their heavenly Father for preserving their dear one from the sudden death she might have met, had she gone a few steps farther, and fallen into the well.

Poor Fanny suffered for her disobedience. For months she was confined to her couch; unable to join in the merry gambols she so fondly loved; unable to have a race with her dear Frolic; forced to lie, day after day, and suffer pain and weariness. How often did she wish she had obeyed the voice of conscience, instead of the voice of Satan! We hope, however, it proved to her a life-long lesson, and that she was able to say, with David, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes.'

Roger did not forget his promise to Fanny. One wet morning he asked Mr. Malcolm to allow him to spend half an hour with the young ladies, to tell them a story

about his grandchild. Mr. Malcolm knew well his children would hear nothing from old Roger but what would instruct them, and so he readily granted his permission.

Fanny was lying on a couch in the schoolroom, so Mrs. Malcolm desired Alice to bring old Roger up-stairs. He had not seen Fanny since the day he carried her home, and was sorry to find the roses had faded from her cheeks; as he himself expressed it: 'to see his bonnie young lady so pale and white.'

'Never mind, Roger,' she replied; 'I deserve it all, and far more. But I long to hear about little Maggie; do tell me something about her.' No more favourite theme could Fanny have chosen for old Roger.

'Well then, my dears, my little grandchild was a fair-haired, winsome bairn. She was the sunbeam of our cottage. My dear wife was taken from me to live with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, and this little one came to partly fill the void in my heart.

'Poor little lamb! She one day said to me, "Grandfather, I think I would like to go home."

"Go home!" I said; "sure and you are at home with your own mother and father, and your old grandfather."

"Yes! but I mean the home above the blue sky. I would like to see Jesus; and mother says, if I am a good child, Jesus will take me up there, and I will be with Him for ever."

'I looked at the child: her face was like an angel's—so sweet, and so happy-looking; her curls thrown back, and her eyes turned up to me, and she wearing her bright smile.

'From that hour I thought my lamb would soon be folded in her Saviour's arms. One day, I remember—oh! so well—she was then about eight years old. Her mother was going from home in the morning, and as she left the house, she said, "Mind, Maggie, you are not to leave this house until I come back." And the child answered so sweetly, "No, mother, I will not."

'Up to this time she had never thought of disobeying either father or mother. I was in the next room, and I

Alice and Fanny.

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thought to myself, "If the child meets with a temptation, won't it be hard for her to resist it?"

"The mother had not gone very far, when in comes Elizabeth and Annie Price.

"Come, now, Maggie," say they, "put on your bonnet quickly, we are going to have such fun! The teacher in our school said we might have a holiday; and she said as many of us as liked might go to the Meadow Farm, and she would send directions to old Betty to give us plenty of tea and home-made bread. Was it not kind of our teacher?"

"Very," replied Maggie; "but I can't go."

"Can't go!" said both the girls; "but you must. We never could be happy without you;" for you see, my dears, everybody loved little Maggie.

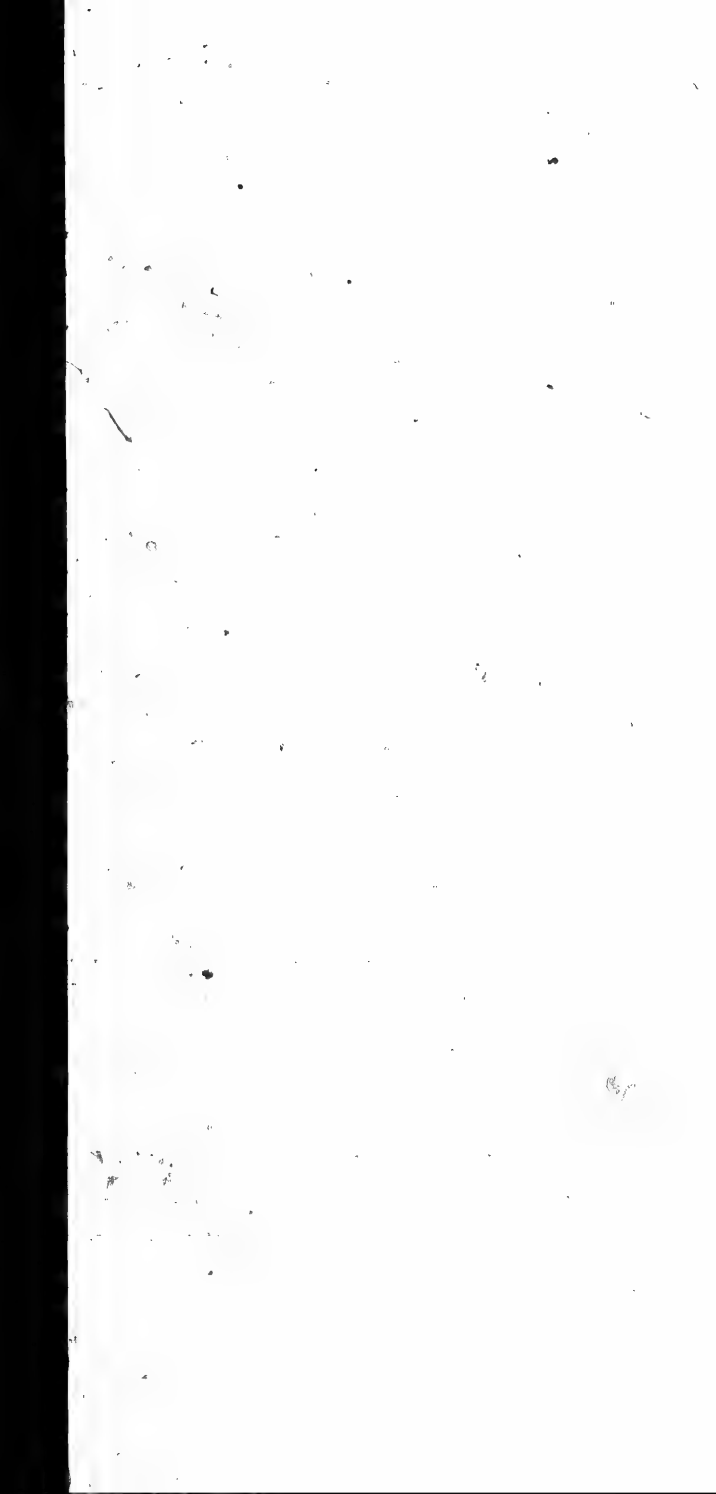
"But I tell you I can't go," she said. "Mother told me not to leave the house until she came back, and I'll not leave it for anything. Not but I would love to go with you; but you know I couldn't. Now, could I?" she added, as the girls lingered, still hoping Maggie would change her mind.

"They did not answer; but left the house with slower steps than they entered. Maggie watched them as they passed down the lane arm in arm, and I think she did wish a wee bit that she could have gone with them; but when she turned into the house, I heard her go to the chair at the fireside, and kneeling down, she said, "I thank Thee, O Lord, for helping me to crush Satan."

"Her mother soon after came in, and seeing her there, said:

"Oh, Maggie! have you not gone with the girls to Meadow Farm?" and then Maggie told her all, and she felt so happy—far happier than if she had disobeyed her mother. It made the mother's heart very glad, and I confess it added a little to my own happiness; for, you see, I reasoned thus: "If Maggie obeys her earthly parents this way, won't she be the more ready to obey her heavenly Father, and submit to His will in after life?"

"I did not then know my little darling would not long serve the Lord on earth. She very soon after sickened.



I think it was fever, for she was wandering most part of the time she was ill. Sometimes she knew us all, and she would aye ask us to read the Bible, and sing her some hymns. She liked that one best :

"There's a *Rest* for little children,
Above the bright blue sky,
Who love the blessed Saviour,
And 'Abba, Father!' cry.
A rest from every turmoil,
From sin and danger free ;
Where every little pilgrim
Shall rest eternally."

"In a few days Maggie's spirit returned to God who gave it; and her last words were, "I am going *home*—HOME." And soon, my dears, old Roger will be going *home*. He longs to meet his dear little Maggie in that sweet place—

"Where everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers grow."

The tears rolled down the old man's cheeks as he told this simple tale to the young ladies. They wept too, knowing they would soon hear his voice no more.

"Thank you, Roger," they both exclaimed; "we are very much obliged to you for your nice story; and," added Fanny, "I will try, Roger, and be obedient like Maggie."

"That's right, Miss Fanny, that's right; be a good child, and you'll one day see my Maggie in the bright and happy home above."

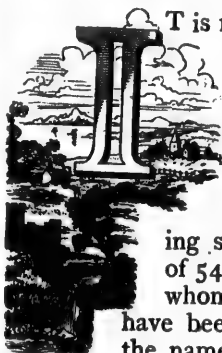
I may add, that Fanny was hereafter an obedient child. Her sprain settled into lameness for life, and she often thought of those solemn words of Scripture: "Be sure your sin will find you out."

"Deceit and disobedience lead
To sorrow and disgrace;
Will you a friendly warning heed,
And now your steps retrace?
There is a path which leads to God,—
Christ is the living way,—
And those who love that heavenly road
Will never go astray."

J. K.

RAGGED SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE MOVEMENT.



T is now more than twenty years since the Ragged School movement began to attract the attention of the public. It has now grown into such magnitude in London, that, within a radius of five miles from Charing Cross, there are 204 day schools, 326 Sabbath schools, and 217 evening schools, with an average attendance of 54,984 scholars; more than two-thirds of whom, but for these facilities, never would have been within a school, nor have heard the name of the Almighty, save when it was taken in vain. All these schools are under what is called 'the Union,' and are supported by grants from funds at its disposal, and by voluntary subscriptions collected by each separate school.

The affairs of the Ragged School Union are conducted by a large committee, composed of clergymen and gentlemen; and the noble Earl of Shaftesbury has been its chairman or president ever since its formation.

You would, I am sure, like to hear something of these devoted men, who have spent so much time and money in trying to rescue the poor outcasts. Many have gone to reap the reward of their labours; but there are still a goodly number left, and working hard in the cause, who witnessed its formation in 1845.

I will begin with '*our noble Earl*,'—the only name by which Lord Shaftesbury is known, both by teachers and scholars. The latter, at least the younger of them, could tell you no other; but all alike claim him as their own individual property. The scholars look up to him as a father; and the teachers know that in him they

have a friend, ever ready to help them with a kind word and Christian advice under every difficulty. At any time he is ready to visit a school, however distant it may be, to give, by his wise counsel, comfort and help to some perplexed superintendent ; or again, he will go to some of the Night Refuges to see that all is carried on as well



as their humble means will permit, for the benefit of the poor creatures. Lord Shaftesbury's acquaintance with the poor is even more extensive than Judge Payne's. It is very amusing to hear how frequently he is greeted by people of all grades of society, with 'How do you do, my lord?' Surely, never was there a man so beloved!

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Next comes Mr. Payne, lately counsellor, but now judge, who, after his Lordship, is best-known and most beloved. He, too, is ever ready to visit a school, whatever its locality may be, to aid with his advice in its management, or to take a class if a teacher is wanted; his kind words, his merry laugh, and original mode of teaching, making even the most wretched happy for the time being. At the Annual Meeting of the Union, held in Exeter Hall every May, when our noble Earl always presides, and when the spacious hall is so crowded that hundreds go away for want of room, Judge Payne's appearance brings down loud and continued cheering. His speeches are not only most amusing, but also full of good advice and encouragement, and always conclude with what he calls 'a tail-piece,' that is, a piece of poetry full of wit and point. He has written upwards of 1800 of these pieces. I will add one at the end of this paper as a specimen. He often receives presents from some of the schools in which he is so well known: one night he appeared at Exeter Hall with a pair of slippers which had been made at one school; a shirt made at the Lamb and Flag School, on which was embroidered in red cotton, at the button holes, a lamb, holding a cross and flag (the Knights Templars' insignia); and a waistcoat which the girls at Field Lane had made for him, but we were such poor tailors there that we forgot to put in pockets. As he showed all these things at the meeting, he said we were sensible people at Field Lane, for we knew he had very little money, and if he had any to spare it had no business to be in his pocket.

Then Mr. John M'Gregor, the barrister, is so well known for the numerous works in which he is engaged, for raising the moral and physical condition of the lower classes, that he needs no comment from me, but he is one whose presence always brings happiness.

I could enumerate many more who have laboured in the work from its commencement, but will only add the name of Mr. Gent, the secretary of the Union, who, I

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think, has as much of the love and esteem of all connected with it as any I have spoken of.

I will not enter into a detail of all the offshoots to which the Ragged School movement has given rise, till I have told you some anecdotes of the children I have met with; of some that have given us pleasure, and also of others that have caused us pain; yet I think, on the whole, the pleasure predominates.

G. J.

'Lord Shaftesbury, my leader,
When first I met with thee,
I was a humble pleader,
And thou a great M.P.
Yet we have worked together,
Through God's abounding grace,
In every kind of *weather*,
In every sort of *place*!

'Lord Shaftesbury, my leader,
When I thy service took,
Thou wast a constant reader
Of God's own blessed book.
And I have tried to follow,
And so our bond has been
Not feeble, false, or hollow,
But steadfast and serene.

'Lord Shaftesbury, my leader,
Our friendship has gone on,
Till, growing like a cedar,
Its years are twenty-one.
And nurtured by communion,
And trained by Scripture rules,
It stands a *manly* union
For God and Ragged Schools.

'Lord Shaftesbury, my leader,
When earthly work is done,
And death, the mighty feeder
On all beneath the sun,

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G. J.

Has laid his hand upon us,
And fixed us with his darts,
The fame our work has won us
Shall dwell in children's hearts.

'Lord Shaftesbury, my leader,
Long may'st thou live to be
An earnest interceder
For all whom here I see.
And when, to swell the chorus
Of heaven, the good attain,
May not one voice before us
Be wanting to the strain.

'Lord Shaftesbury, my leader,
My muse has tired her wing;
And soon no cause will need her,
And she will cease to sing.
But now all join to speed her,
While thus they hear her say,
"Lord Shaftesbury, my leader,
God bless thee night and day."

THE DUTY OF CHILDREN TO THEIR PARENTS.

BY THE REV. J. THOMSON, PAISLEY.



HERE cannot be a more comprehensive statement than that which is contained in these few and simple words: 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' To these, therefore, we shall chiefly confine our remarks, and give some reasons why this honour should be rendered.

1. *Because it is commanded by God.*—It is not left in their option, whether children shall honour their parents or not; but there is an express command given. And consider from whom the command comes. It comes

from Him, who gave you being, who supplies your daily wants, who bestows all your comforts and blessings; and above all, who gave his only-begotten Son for your salvation, and who is to be the Judge of the world in that great day, when every one shall receive according to the deeds done in the body. See, then, that ye refuse not Him who speaks from heaven, and who has power to cast soul and body into hell.

2. *Because it is a right and reasonable duty.*—This is evident from the relation in which children stand to their parents,—a relation of inferiority, of dependence, and subjection. Every father is a king, as well as a priest, in his own house, and he has authority from above to rule his family in the fear of God, and in accordance with God's will. When children, therefore, disregard this authority, they are guilty of despising not man only, but God himself. 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.'

3. *Because it is highly advantageous to the children themselves.*—The fifth commandment is the *first* with promise; for God has annexed to it a promise of long life and temporal prosperity, in so far as that may be for His own glory and for our real good. And though dutiful children may die as well as others, or though they may live in comparative poverty, yet still the habits of self-restraint and submission to authority, which they acquire at home, tend directly to preserve their lives, and promote even their bodily health. Such habits also tend to fit them for greater usefulness in society, and to secure for them that respect and confidence which pave the way to worldly success; and above all, such gracious habits acquired in early youth, tend to prepare them for submitting to God's authority, and for listening with meekness and docility to the instructions of His holy word.

'A father's voice with reverence we
On earth have often heard :
The Father of our spirits now
Demands the same regard.'

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The Duty of Children to their Parents.

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4. *Because Christ has set an example of filial piety.*—In His early youth, He was *subject* to His parents, as long as He remained under their roof. But His respect and love did not cease even then; for while He was suffering the agonies of the cross, Jesus observed His mother (who was then probably a widow) standing near, and overwhelmed with sorrow; and, forgetful of His own sufferings, and concerned for her comfort, He commended her with His dying breath to the care of the beloved disciple, saying to him, 'Behold thy mother!' and to her, 'Behold thy son!' And it is added, that from that time John took Mary to his own home, and treated her with the love and respect of a dutiful son. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.'

5. *Because you have a promise of divine grace to help you.*—In your own strength, you cannot obey this, or any other of God's commandments. 'Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child,' and corruption too; and nothing but grace can drive out sin, or draw us to the practice of virtue. But, says Christ, 'my grace is sufficient for thee.' That grace can subdue the proudest, can soften the hardest, and warm the coldest heart. That grace can change the disobedient into a dutiful child; the sullen and froward into a loving and gentle child; and the thoughtless, giddy, and frivolous into a reflecting, serious, and holy child. That grace can turn the hearts of children, like the rivers of water, to their parents, and the hearts of parents to their children, and the hearts of both to God. And that grace is given for the asking, when it is asked in the name of Christ; for if earthly parents, 'being evil, know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?' 'Ask, and ye shall receive.'—From *'The Domestic Circle, or the Relations, Responsibilities, and Duties of Home Life.'*

SKETCHES IN INDIA.



SOMETIMES in winter, when the snow is falling fast and the children cannot get out to play, I dare say some of my young friends are ready to cry out, 'Oh how I wish I were in India!—no cold fingers there—no chilblains—no need to wrap oneself up before going out. I would just run out as much as I pleased, and play in the garden and catch the lovely butterflies, and climb the palm-trees, and it would be always bright sunshine, and I would be so happy! I wish I were in India.'

Stop a little, my young friend; not quite so fast, if you please. If you were in India at this moment, instead of running about in the garden, you would be obliged to keep the house the whole day from about seven in the morning till five or six in the evening; and instead of jumping and running and climbing, with bright eyes and rosy cheeks, you would be sitting in a corner with a very white face and a bad headache, longing for the sun to go down; and the Doctor would come in and say, 'That child is getting too old for this country; you must send him away to England by the very next Mail.' So you would find yourself very quickly separated from your dear parents, and everybody whom you cared for, and sent away from the bright, warm, sunny land of India, to England, with its grey skies and its bracing winter days, where boys and girls grow up to be strong and hardy like their fathers and mothers, and soon learn to brave the cold, and laugh at 'Johnnie Frost' and his snowy coat.

In our own country, summer and winter are the most marked distinctions of the year; in India, the chief differences lie between the dry and the rainy seasons.

During the dry season, for week after week, and month after month, not a drop of rain falls, and scarcely a cloud can ever be seen. The grass gets quite withered up, so that not a blade is visible; many of the trees lose their leaves, as with us in winter, and those that retain them stand all drooping, and covered with dust as if they were made of india-rubber. The first sound one hears in the morning, and the last in the evening, is that of men drawing water from wells to supply the thirsty gardens and fields, where everything is ready to perish unless watered.

Then the hot season comes, and the rays of the sun become every day more burning, so that the fields seem scorched, and the ground becomes cracked and seamed with rents as if gasping for a drink of water. This goes on till about the middle of June; then comes the *monsoon*, as it is called, and great clouds gather every evening, and fly wildly over the face of the sky, eagerly watched by everybody, for by that time all are longing for the rain. At last the heavens grow black overhead, a flash of lightning seems to tear the air, and it is instantly followed by a tremendous roar of thunder, and rain like a cataract. You never saw such rain. It is not drops, but sheets of water; it comes down *roaring*; and instead of the sultry heat which prevailed before, there is now a wild south-west wind blowing over land and sea, sweeping all before it, and refreshing the whole face of nature.

I was amazed with the change that two or three days of this rain produced. It was beautiful to see how quickly the fresh young grass sprung up, full of lovely purple balsams and other wild flowers; the trees made haste to become green again; and the jungle, which had been like a mass of bare sticks, became wreathed with beautiful creepers, and covered with fresh leaves and flowers. It is impossible to describe the beauty of the change produced by the welcome rain; and when I hear people at home grumbling and groaning over wet days, and wishing that it were always sunny weather, I sometimes wish they

could see what it is to be long under a cloudless sky, in order that they might know the preciousness of God's welcome gift of *rain*. For it is He who orders the weather, and it is beautiful to see His wisdom in all He appoints. David knew this when he said, 'He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs,' Ps. cvii. 35. And beautifully does he describe his own earnest longings after God, when he says, in Psalm lxiii. 1: 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee *in a dry and thirsty land*, where no water is.' You will find similar expressions in Psalm xlii. 1, 2, and Psalm cxliii. 6, and many other passages; and if you will turn to John iv. 13, and John vii. 37, you will find how the Lord Jesus Christ himself promises to supply the water of life to the thirsty soul. I hope that some of my young readers who have reference Bibles will look out these passages, and they will be able to find others of the same kind relating to this subject. And then, dear children, think of God's goodness to you! Lift up your hearts to thank the blessed Saviour who has so freely offered you this great gift of everlasting life, purchased for you by His own blood, and say to Him, for your own selves, as the poor woman at the well of Samaria once did, 'Lord, give me this water, that I thirst not!'

LONGING FOR RAIN.

(WRITTEN IN INDIA.)

FOR water, oh, for water!
 All nature seems to cry;
 As o'er the Indian landscape,
 The sun of May rides high.
 The grass is parched and withered,
 The trees all drooping stand;
 And like a barren desert,
 Appears the thirsty land.

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i. 37, you will
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to find others
nd then, dear
Lift up your
has so freely
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Samaria once
not !'

Longing for Rain.

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'For water, living water !'
The fainting spirit sighs.
'This world has not one fountain
That truly satisfies !
The plants of grace are drooping,
The fruits of faith are dead :
I need a gush of water
From the living Fountain-head !
Send forth, O Lord, Thy Spirit,
Thou only canst impart
A flood of life and gladness
To the weary thirsty heart.'

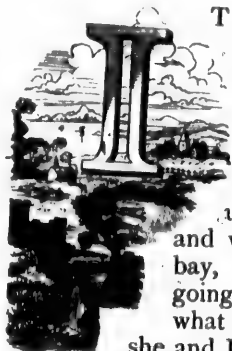
'For water, O for water !'
This heathen country groans :
Unblessed by streams from heaven,
They worship stocks and stones.
They worship what they know not,—
Ah, Lord, they know not Thee !
Pour forth, pour forth Thy Spirit,
Make known salvation free,—
Till India's sons are gladdened
—With streams of heavenly grace ;
And to a smiling garden
Thou turn'st this barren place !



'TIME AND TIDE WAIT FOR NO MAN.'

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'COPSLEY ANNALS,' 'UNDER THE MICROSCOPE,' ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER II.



They seemed as if everything was too pleasant to leave,—the waves were lapping up so coolly at the foot of the rocks which went down almost like steps from the entrances to the caves, and the sea-gulls had been flapping about quite near to us, and Mary and I had turned round and were watching white sails out of the bay, and wondering where they were going. But, however, we rose up somewhat unwillingly at Miss Irwin's call, while she and Fanny put the things together in the basket; and we were proceeding in a leisurely manner to prepare for our walk, when suddenly our brothers came running round the corner where the rocks projected towards the sea, with the exclamation, 'What has every one been thinking about? The tide is nearly up to the wall already!'

Poor Miss Irwin, who, what had been doing during the time in which her eyes were not closed, had not been remembering that the sea did not come up to the higher ground on which we were encamped until it covered the sands along which lay our retreat, ran, at the imminent risk of slipping into a deep pool, round the shelving rocks from which the whole reach of shore might be surveyed, and hurrying back with a very uncomfortable expression of countenance; desired Fanny to take the basket, herself caught hold of Mary, and begging Ernest and Fred to keep with me, began to lead the way. She had not long been with us, and was therefore less

accustomed than many would have been to the rapid rise of the tides on the Desborough coast; while it seemed unaccountable, only so it was, that all of us should have been too much engaged with our various occupations, to remember that the waves came up to the caverns last of all.

I am afraid that I was not very sorry, as I looked along the sands, and saw that we should have some paddling, as a matter of duty and necessity. You see I had rather an enterprising spirit, and did not, as before observed, buy my own shoes and stockings, and had a comfortable impression that upon Miss Irwin devolved the responsibility of delivering us up in safety to our parents; while, in strict confidence, I imparted to my brothers that it was rather fun to see a grown-up lady obliged to run along through the edges of the waves, which already began to touch the sea-wall, and come over her toes.

'I can't go so fast, and I'm afraid!' suddenly cried Mary, who had at first laughed with us at our perplexity; and good Miss Irwin lifted her up quickly, wet feet and all, and carried her as well as she could. But meantime the water was up to our ankles, and Mary's depression of spirit began silently to infect us also.

Fred, after a minute, stopped to look back. He knew more than Miss Irwin about the tides and the coast, and she stopped at once, as he called out to her, 'Miss Irwin, it's no use going on; the water will be up to our knees in a quarter of an hour, and there's nearly a mile to the steps.'

'But how are we to get away at all?' asked poor Miss Irwin, panting under Mary's weight, which, however, was nothing to the load of anxiety portrayed in her countenance; 'the sea wall is too high and steep for us to climb, and every moment is precious.'

'The only way is to go back,' said Fred. 'There are some rocks on the other side of the caverns which would hardly be covered as yet; and if only we can get round them, the shore goes in a little, and some way on there's

a steep sort of watercourse up the cliff which we must climb.

'Are you quite sure?' asked Miss Irwin, looking very miserable, as Fanny began to cry, Mary instantly chiming in, while a great splash up to our ankles gave a decided hint that there was not a moment to spare.

'Quite,' said Fred; and he and Ernest each took hold of one of my hands, just as I was beginning to think that fun had changed into very serious earnest, and that I might as well make one with my sisters and take to crying too; and turning round, we all three ran as fast as we could through the treacherous water that, from being such a friend in the morning, had suddenly become our enemy, and made for the rocks and caverns which were not yet invaded by the waves.

'Come, Fanny dear,' I heard Miss Irwin say behind us, 'crying won't do any good, or I'd cry too. There's salt water enough without our contributing any more.' And on, on we splashed, retracing our steps, and feeling very forlorn as we made difficult progress with our backs turned from home; while the stones seemed more slippery than before, and our difficulties increased at every step.

We were just above the tide as we worked our way round the mouth of the cavern where, less than three hours before, we had dined so merrily; and I remember looking pathetically towards crumbs which still adorned our table-rock, with the thought that very soon they would be washed away, while I marked how rapidly the waves had mounted up since our departure, and that the place upon which Mary and I had been lying was under water already.

'Don't pull my wrist so hard, Ernest,' I said, half crossly, as we gradually rounded the promontory formed by the caverns; 'I can't go faster.'

'Well, then, come on!' he answered; 'don't you hear the swish-sh-sh of the waves round the corner? You wouldn't like to be washed into one of the caves, and be drowned.'

It was an awful thought, especially as I remembered my disrespectful review of home comforts, when I had been dreaming of Robinson Crusoe life in a cavern, and I humbly surrendered my hand to my brother's, thankful to be steered round slippery pools, and to be held up by his greater strength, as we made our way in front, followed by our kind, burdened Miss Irwin, who was obliged to make little Mary walk now and then, when she was unable to carry her longer.

Higher and higher rose the tide as we got round the rocks, and jumped on to the few inches of sand between the waves and the perpendicular cliff, which it was hopeless to think of climbing.

'How far off is the path up the cliff, Freddy?' asked Miss Irwin, anxiously.

'Nearly half a mile,' he replied; 'but you see this bit of coast is farther in than it is on the other side of the caves. The sea there must be a foot and a half high by this time.'

'Then we must run,' said Miss Irwin. 'Fanny dear, you take little Mary's other hand; we'll both help her together.'

And we did run: Freddy, encumbered only by the basket, first; then Ernest and I; then Miss Irwin and our sisters. We ran till we thought we could not run any faster; but the waves, though they did not seem in such a hurry, made haste quietly, and were craftily intercepting our passage. Once again they were up to our toes, now to our ankles, and were now creeping up our legs with a playful sort of caressing motion, that seemed the more treacherous and unkind.

'I can see the place in the cliff now,' cried Fred, looking back; and poor Miss Irwin, who was shortsighted, vainly stretched her eyes in hopes of seeing it too.

'I can't run any more,' panted Fanny; 'and I know we shall all be drowned; and what will papa and mamma say?'

Mary, in whose eyes Fanny was always an oracle, im-

mediately began to cry afresh ; while Ernest—good faithful brother as he was—tugged me on still faster, lest I should follow her example.

‘I think we shall get safe,’ he said, hopefully ; but I, who knew his voice, detected in a moment a quiver of uncertainty, which told me that he was not so confident as he wished to appear.

‘And suppose the waves come up between us and the path?’ I said dolefully. ‘We can’t get on once they’ve got up to our mouths.’

‘We should have to turn back again, and try and get to some rock among the caves that’s above high-water mark,’ he replied, ‘and stay there till the tide goes out again, enough for us to go home.’

‘But papa and mamma ; what will they think?’ I faltered. ‘Oh, Ernest, how frightened poor mamma would be!’

‘I’m afraid they would,’ said Ernest ; ‘but after all, it would only be for a few hours, and perhaps they’d send a boat to find us out.’

‘And suppose—suppose, Ernest,’ I said, breaking down altogether, and sobbing more tumultuously than the waves—‘suppose we don’t get even up the rocks, and the sea comes up before we can escape?’

‘Then,’ said Ernest, ‘we must ask God to make some way for us, and if not—’

‘If not—’ I gasped, as we still struggled on, hand-in-hand.

‘Well, remember what we all sing on Sunday,’ he said. ‘The sea is His, and He made it.’ And, after all, if we trust in Him, we must be safe one way or the other.’

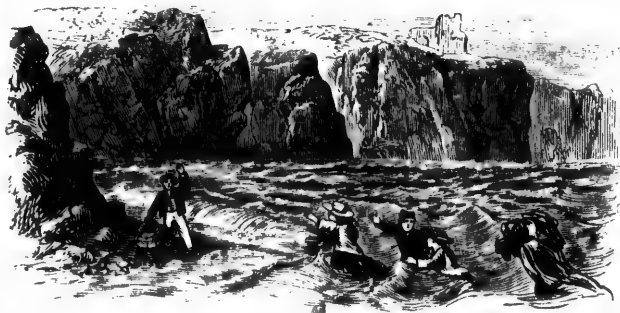
‘One way ;’ I knew what that was—the hollow in the cliff, or a rock above high-water mark. ‘The other ;’ I did not like to think what that meant, although I understood what Ernest was thinking. To me it was more terrible than to him.

The water was up to our knees now, and the wading was hard work. My brother dragged me ; Miss Irwin

and Fanny nearly carried Mary ; Fred still ran in front with the basket.

We all, even Miss Irwin, could now see the gully in the cliff on before us ; but we could see, too, a thick barrier of water between. 'Now for a push!' she said, as cheerfully as she could ; but I heard her voice trembling, as once more she took Mary in her arms, and bravely tried to rally our drooping courage.

A final push ! One minute more, the water is up to my knees. Three minutes more, the water is up to my waist. Five minutes more, Fred is at the foot of the place in the cliff up which we are to climb, and the water



is nearly to my chest. Six minutes more, and we have reached the steep cleft hollowed out by some winter stream in the overhanging sides of the cliff, and Ernest is dragging me up out of reach of the hungry waves. Twenty minutes more, and we are panting, weary, soaking, but safe on the top of the cliff ; while at the foot, the sea is shimmering, and dancing, and foaming, as if what had been such cruel earnest to us, had to it only been a little bit of afternoon amusement, quite in the ordinary way of business.

'God has been very good in preserving us,' said Miss Irwin, out of depths of exhaustion ; while I put my wet arms round Ernest's wet shoulder, and struggled for breath.

We were four or five miles from home, and no vehicle was near, if even it had been safe for us to drive home in our wet clothes : so, after resting as long as was necessary, Miss Irwin wearily led the way in search of a cottage.

I wonder whether the peaceable old woman is still alive who, late on a certain summer afternoon between twenty and thirty years ago, was interrupted in her quiet cup of tea by the appearance at her door of a drenched lady and five drenched children, who meekly entreated her to dry them. I should hardly suppose that she can be ; but for the honour of the solitary cottage on the cliff, let me here record how that benevolent and good old lady renounced her last half-cup, received us without a word beyond words of sympathy, which fell from her lips as freely as the salt water from our garments, made us welcome in her clean kitchen, undressed Mary and me, and wrapping us up in sheets, after drying us well, put us to bed ; furnished stockings of untold warmth and comfort to the others, and, after producing strange wraps from dresser and other drawers, made tea and toast for us all, with as much diligence and good-will as if she had herself invited us to an evening party, and we had only come in the ordinary course of circumstances.

Safe, warm, and dry, Mary and I, from that excellent old lady's bed in the corner of the room, surveyed the proceedings with unspeakable gratification, and made ourselves immediately as merry as crickets, while poor Miss Irwin, almost too much exhausted to speak, and only thinking of our parents' anxiety, could hardly at first do more than murmur over and over, 'You're very kind ; indeed, I can't thank you enough.'

'Deary me, ma'am !' responded our hostess, 'I'd do a deal more if I could, for you and the pretty lambs, bless their hearts ! besides that, their papa's well known in the neighbourhood for a good gentleman. Why, it seems just a special mercy my house being so handy. And to think of them dear little things being so near drowned, — why, tea and toast's nothing to it !'

If our dinner had been a meal of celebrity, certainly our tea in old Mrs. Ball's cottage was one still more to be remembered. Mary and I in our sheets consumed her provisions out of a mutual mug and plate. Fanny, on a stool by the fire, and wrapped up in a marvellous flannel garment, so unlike anything that I have ever seen before or since, that I cannot give it a name, more quietly pursued the same occupation; while Ernest and Fred, arrayed in portions of the wardrobe belonging to a certain Joe, at present invisible, but shortly, we were informed, to be expected, consumed his share of the provision without any difficulty; while I pictured to myself the said Joe's astonishment when he should suddenly arrive and find the invaders of his mother's peaceful cottage, like Mother Hubbard's dog, dressed in his clothes!

He did arrive at last, and looked round for a time speechlessly; then, taking off his hat, and blowing his nose, as if to clear his vision, he inspected Fred and Ernest, still without speaking, and finally turning his glance towards his mother's hospitable countenance, gave way to her own innocent exclamation, 'Deary me!'

'Yes, Joe,' responded that worthy dame, apparently interpreting a fulness of thought in his remark, which we could not immediately discover, 'it's just that. And what you've got to do is to get round the cart, and put clean straw in the bottom, and a cushion or two for the young ladies, and drive 'em all steady home to their anxious parents. I'd be proud for you to stay,' she went on, turning to Miss Irwin,—while Joe, apparently relieved from his surprise at having something to do, went out as desired,—'I'd be proud for you to stay all night if you would,' (and Mary and I wondered what, under the circumstances, would be the sleeping arrangements); 'but I know a parent's heart, having one myself; and I wouldn't be the one to keep them dear innocents from their mother's arms not a minute more than needful for the drying, warming, and cleaning of them a bit.'

Well, you can imagine our farewells as we left kind

Mrs. Ball, and mounted into the cart, and jolted along the road running at the top of the red cliffs under which we had fought our battle with the waves, which now climbed and foamed high up their sides,—‘deep enough to drown giants,’ Mary suggested to Joe, who, thinking upon it, came to the conclusion that, Goliath being regarded as a standard measure, it was. And you can imagine our arrival at home, our parents anxiously meeting us in the avenue, and beholding with amazement the many-coloured hues of our garments, which red clay, salt water, green sea-weed, and sand had combined to render very different from those with which we set out. Our father’s donation to Joe—who by this time had arrived at taking quite an interest in our history, and with whom Mary had struck up a friendship, as he covered her round at intervals in his mother’s cloak—was so liberal that, having first pulled his hair, and then exclaimed, ‘Deary me, sir,’ and finally said several times over, ‘Kindly welcome,’ he turned round to his cart, and invited the whole family to his mother’s house, an invitation which the week after we accepted, bearing a basket well stored with tea, sugar, arrow-root, and similar comforts, which our mother sent with her best thanks to Mrs. Ball for the kindness shown to her half drowned children.

My little white bed was a pleasant place to lie down in that night; and as I listened to the rise and fall of the waves under our windows, and thought how safe home felt, I came to the conclusion that it was better than sleeping in a cavern among sea-weeds and shells; and I fell asleep with the thought in my heart of God’s goodness in bringing us safely through our dangerous struggle under the cliffs, although even that thought was soon drowned in the deep quiet slumber of a weary child.

It almost seemed like a dream the next morning when we told all our adventures over and over again to Annette and our nurses, and met clean and tidy at breakfast, as if we had never been draggled, and wet, and clay-stained in our lives. It almost seems like a dream now, now

that some of us are married and have children of our own, and that rows of houses, and terraces, and crescents are built over the cliffs which were solitary and seldom visited then.

But yet it is a dream-story of our childish days which I have often remembered when the words, '*Time and tide wait for no man*,' have sounded in my ears; when thoughts of a time which must come, and of a tide which will irresistibly flow, however we may delay our expectations of it, rise to my mind and bid me not delay to make ready.

Dear children, the time of death and the tide of eternity will not wait your call. In other words, God may summon you at such a time and in such an hour as you think not; and if you have only been amusing yourselves in life, gathering its shells and sea-weed, careless of preparation,—that is, if you have been trifling away opportunities of usefulness, and passing the hours without making sure of a refuge in the last hour of death, you will bitterly mourn that you put off doing so until too late.

Shall I tell you what our Ernest said when he was dying, when, at fifteen, the floods of eternity began to rise round him, and he knew that his time was near?

'I have no fear. Jesus Christ has died for me.

"Just as I am; without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God I come!"

Perhaps you say, 'There's time enough!' Perhaps you think, as we did when we were playing with our backs to the waves, that it is pleasanter to be occupied with your pleasures, and games, and enjoyments in this life, than to be troubling yourselves about such gloomy thoughts as those of death and of eternity. Perhaps you put off such ideas with the assurance that when that time comes you will find some refuge,—you will have credit for being well brought up, well taught in religion, quite different from poor neglected children who have no knowledge of

what is right. You are amiable, you think, and attentive, and are called good children ; although I am inclined to believe that few thoughtful children really feel satisfied that this is enough.

And all the time *the tide is coming in*,—that is, minute by minute, hour by hour, week by week, year by year, eternity is coming nearer, nearer, nearer still.

Time by moments steals away,
First the hour and then the day.

And then, at the last, if you have not found something better than such things to be your safety and your ark of refuge, hear what is spoken by the mouth of the Lord : 'The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.'

Ah ! we must find in the Rock of Ages the refuge for our last hour. We must do as Ernest did,—cast our sins on Jesus, believe that He died and took our punishment in our stead, give our hearts to Him, and rest all our load of guilt on Him who gave His life for the sheep. Then, when the tide of eternity flows in upon us, and when this life is passing away, and when all earthly help fails, the Man Christ Jesus will be our refuge, and we, too, shall be able to say, 'I have no fear, Jesus died for me.'



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LIZZIE WILLIS AND THE QUEEN OF DREAMLAND.

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LIZZIE WILLIS,
AND WHAT SHE LEARNED FROM THE FAIRY QUEEN OF
DREAMLAND.

BY MONA B. BICKERSTAFFE.

CHAPTER I.



'H dear!' exclaimed little Lizzie Willis, 'how I do hate sewing! Please, mother, let me put it away now; I am sure I have worked for more than an hour.'

'No, Lizzie, I cannot allow you to be so idle. Instead of an hour, you have not been twenty minutes; and badly you have done your work too. See the stitches in your seams, and then look at Marion's, and compare the difference.'

'But Marion likes sewing, and I hate it.'

'*Hate* is not a right expression for a little girl. And, by your own account, what is there that you do not hate? You say you hate sewing; and if I give you house-work to do, you hate it. You hate learning lessons, and you hate weeding the garden. Indeed, I do not know what to do with you; for you will have to work for your living by and by, and if you go on disliking all kinds of employment, I am sure I cannot think what must become of you.' In saying the last words, Mrs. Willis's voice trembled, and her eyes filled with tears.

'Never mind, mother,' said Marion, 'sister won't always be so idle. Come, Lizzie, do go on; Mrs. Bell's footman is to call for these petticoats on his way from town, and yours is not half done. Do try and finish it, there's a dear, and don't add to poor mother's troubles;' and

Marion, putting her hand caressingly on her sister's shoulder, tried to coax her into diligence.

But Lizzie was not going to be coaxed. To say the truth, she was in a very bad temper. She knew that her work was badly done; and, instead of trying to do better, she became vexed with herself, and vexed with Marion too. She pouted and cried, and ran the needle into her finger, and then cried again when she saw the blood come; so at last Mrs. Willis said, 'There, child, put it by and go away. I shall do it quicker myself; and you are only soiling and staining it, so that it will not be fit to be seen. Go out into the wood and gather a few sticks, the driest you can find. I must set the kettle on in time, so that we may have an early tea. I do hope,' said she, turning to Marion, 'that Mrs. Bell will send the money quickly this time. I want to lay in a little stock of fuel, and buy you children some new shoes before the wet season begins.'

Mrs. Willis was a very poor, but very industrious woman; one who had known better days. Her late husband was a colour-sergeant in a marching regiment, and before her marriage she had been for many years lady's maid in a gentleman's family, in which situation she received such very high wages that she was enabled to put some money every year into the bank, so that, at the time of her marriage, her savings amounted to no small sum. Her friends thought she might have done much better for herself than by marrying Sergeant Willis, and her kind mistress was very sorry to part with one whom she regarded more as a friend than a servant; but when they saw that the sergeant was a steady respectable man, they made no more objections to the marriage; and the soldier's time having expired, he obtained his discharge, and a pension, too, to compensate for the wounds he had received in his country's service. So they were married, and, very soon after, they settled down in a comfortable dwelling on the borders of a wide moorland or common.

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enjoy a life of idleness; so he farmed some land near his house, and kept his garden in such perfect order, that passers-by often stopped to admire the tasteful arrangement and rare beauty of the flowers. And besides these home occupations, on certain days in the week he went to a town some miles off, where he attended schools and private families, drilling young people, teaching them to stand straight, and walk uprightly, which latter, taken in every sense of the word, is good for the young to learn in the early days of their youth. In the process of time, children were added to the other blessings at the moorland farm; and then Sergeant and Mrs. Willis, as they brought up their two little girls, were inclined to believe that no family in all the world were half so happy as they were.

The two little girls went to a good day school, where Lizzie was the prettiest, but far the idlest of all the little scholars; and while her sister Marion made rapid progress at her lessons, she remained at the bottom of every class. Foolish child! the advantages she enjoyed were by her very lightly esteemed.

So things went on, until misfortune came, as it often does, when it is least expected; and so it happened to the Willis family, for one day, when the sergeant was coming home on the coach from giving his drilling lessons at B—, a dense November fog prevented the driver from seeing the way before him; he made too sharp a turning, and struck against the parapet of a steep old bridge, that spanned a deep though narrow river. The overloaded vehicle swayed with the shock, and overturned, while most of the outside passengers were thrown into the stream below. Sergeant Willis, being a good swimmer, ought not to have been drowned, but several of the terrified females clung to him to save themselves, and so all perished together.

This terrible accident, which was communicated too suddenly by a thoughtless neighbour, had such a sad effect upon the poor widow, that she was for many days confined to her bed, her brain seriously affected; but,

after a while, it pleased God to restore her reason; and though she arose from her couch broken in health and spirits, much of her former energy soon returned, and as she could not bring back the good husband who had been so suddenly taken from her, she set about exerting herself to arrange her affairs, so that she might know what she and her dear children would have to live upon. The farm-stock was sold, and a good deal of the household furniture too; and then, with a heavy heart, the widow bade farewell to the home in which she had enjoyed so many happy years, and with her children took up her abode in a cottage, which, though very small, was prettily situated on the edge of a broad belt of old forest land, known by the name of 'the Duke's Woods.' Here they soon found that they might have been much worse off, for the place had many natural advantages. There was a little garden, which, when put in order, would look very pretty. There was a nice green lane where the children could play without going far out of sight; while a constant supply of pure fresh water came from a little brook, that, dancing merrily over the pebbles, fell in a pretty cascade close by the garden gate. Altogether, when the widow became accustomed to the very small dimensions of her new dwelling, she felt that she had great reason to be thankful for it, for, humble as it was, it was all her own, being a gift from the good lady in whose service her youth had been passed.

Very soon the little garden was put in order. Some flowers from the old home made it look gay enough when they began to flourish, as Marion took care they should do; for she loved flowers, and had learned much about their culture by watching and assisting her father. A good industrious girl was Marion, always cheerful and happy, because she was ever active and busy. It was she who kept the house in order, while her mother was engaged at her washing; for Mrs. Willis was a good laundress and needlewoman, and knowing well that 'God helps those who help themselves,' she begged her friends

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at Stokely Hall and elsewhere to give her their washing and plain sewing ; and so in a little time she managed to make out a livelihood for her and her children.

But it was no easy matter to get through all that was to be done,—indeed, they had to work very hard ; and, I am sorry to say, all the hard work fell on Marion and her mother, for Lizzie, though nearly ten years old, took very little pains to make herself useful in any way. She was a very lovely little girl ; but, unfortunately, she thought too much of her beauty. She had been almost idolized by her doting father, who was never tired of praising her golden curls and large blue eyes, always saying she should be a lady some day, and that her fair complexion should never be exposed to the weather, nor her pretty hands spoiled by hard work. Had he lived, poor man, there is no doubt but he would have done his best to make his word true ; but Providence knew better what was good for Lizzie, and her heavenly Father took His own way of showing her that life is not given us to be passed in dreamy idleness.

On the bright afternoon in which our story opens, Marion and Lizzie were sitting sewing in the porch of their little cottage, which was shaded over by a luxuriant vine, from whence hung many a 'empting cluster of small green grapes. The summer breeze blew softly in at the cottage door, bringing with it a sweet scent of roses, clematis, and mignonette ; the birds sang merry songs as they flitted among the trees in the green lane ; the little brook seemed to be whispering a fairy tale as it rippled over the pebbles and danced down the rock ; while the cooing of the ring-dove, and the crow of the pheasant, added not a little to the harmonious sound that filled the summer air.

It was indeed a delightful afternoon, and Marion would have dearly liked a ramble after the strawberries and other wild wood-berries in the forest close by ; but one glance at her mother's pale careworn countenance told her that it would be very selfish to think of such a thing ; so she tried not to look as if she desired it,

and only worked the more diligently, so as to have the sewing done by the appointed hour. She felt very sorry when Lizzie began to look tired and idle, and heard her mother tell her to go and she would finish her work; for she knew very well that she could do it if she would, and now her mother, instead of resting a while after her ironing, would have to sew very closely to get it finished.

'Dear me,' thought she, 'I wish Lizzie would try to do something.' I know it grieves mother so much, and I am sure father would not have been pleased to see her so idle. She says he promised that she should be a lady; but I wonder if grand ladies are always happy—have they never any sorrow such as we have?

Just then Lizzie passed down the garden on her way to 'the Duke's Woods,' where her mother told her to gather the sticks; and it was with eyes of loving admiration that Marion gazed after her little sister, who truly looked very pretty in her crimson cotton dress, her golden hair hanging over her shoulders, her bright eyes sparkling, and her cheeks rosy with excitement and joy at having succeeded in escaping from her hated task.

Let us follow her on her way as she trips along the grassy lane, just stopping for a moment by the little waterfall, her merry voice mingling with the song of the torrent. On she goes, singing to herself; now and then bounding after a gaily-tinted butterfly, or tempted to wander far out of her path by some cunning dragon-fly, who would venture to show off his long blue body and clear gauzy wings on a flower close to her feet, watching her the while with his brilliant eyes, and darting off just as she thinks she has surely caught him. There he is now, hovering overhead, high up in the air; now up, now down, as if mocking her, and seeming to say, 'Catch me, little girl—you may if you can.'

The forest in the late summer months is gay with many flowers. There are banks of wild thyme that tempt the bee to linger long among their sweet-scented blossoms. There is the blue campanula, with its graceful

drooping bells; the St. John's wort, with its clusters of stately golden flowers; the heath and the furze; the scarlet poppy and corn blue-bottle,—all mingling their varied hues to form the gay carpet that decks many a sunny nook beneath the tall forest trees.

What little girl could pass so many pretty flowers by unnoticed? Certainly not Lizzie Willis; so she gathers them from one side and the other, until her little hands can hold no more; and then she throws them all away in her excitement to reach some wild raspberries. She cried a little while ago because a needle ran into her fingers; but she does not cry now, though her hands and arms are sorely pricked and scratched by the brambles in the thicket where the raspberries grow. 'Oh! if Marion was here,' she exclaims, 'she likes raspberries so much; and I would take her some, only I have no basket or anything to put them in.' So, while regretting her sister's absence, she ate enough for her and herself, and was just beginning to think that she had taken more than was good for her, when she was startled by a loud buzzing in her ear; and plunging out of the briery copse, she ran on for some time without looking behind her, all the while believing herself pursued by the large wasp which she had disturbed while enjoying his dessert off a red ripe raspberry. She need not have been alarmed, for though the insect had buzzed about her for a while, he did not follow her, no doubt thinking it better fun to suck sweet juices from the fruit, than to waste his time flying after a frightened little girl.

Still Lizzie ran on and on, never stopping until she found herself in a part of the forest that she had never seen before. It was a hollow dingle, ending in a little pond. A charmingly secluded spot, so still and quiet, that, looking round, one might fancy himself in the depths of some old primeval forest, as yet untrodden by the foot of man. There the tall trees, interlacing their thick branches, formed a leafy canopy that must have shut out all view of the sky above, but for a few openings among

the leaves, through which the sun's rays gleamed with a lovely light, giving a transparent glow to the colouring of the leafy screen, and then falling with sunny brightness to warm the mossy bank below. This bank, so soft, so smooth, so exquisitely green, formed a pretty setting to the dark fronds of the bulrush and the fleur-de-lis, which, together with the feathery horsetail, fringed the edges of the glassy pool. There were ferns too in profusion: the tall 'Felix mas,' or male fern; the proud 'Osmunda,' or royal fern; and the delicate 'Felix foemina,' that 'Lady fern' of which a poet sings—

'Where the copse wood is the greenest,
Where the fountain glitters sheenest,
Where the morning dew lies longest,
There the lady fern grows strongest.'

Yes, it grew there, tall and strong and graceful, undisturbed save by the summer breeze that played at hide-and-seek among its feathery fronds, causing them to wave and bend over the margin of the pond, as if trying to kiss the smiling water-lilies that floated about among their own smooth and shining leaves.

Ah! what a bouquet Lizzie can gather here! See! she stretches over the pool, and by the help of a hooked stick she secures a white lily-bud, which, deprived of the support of the water, seems quite too heavy for its long soft stem. Now she has discovered a quantity of the bog-pimpernel, and now a little patch of the forget-me-not; and how lovely the bright rose-coloured blossoms of the former look when mingled with the tourquoise blue of the latter, and the lace-like spikelets of the meadow-sweet! Now, surely, she has enough; but see, she is all excitement, for she spies something she particularly wishes to have: what do you think it is? A beautiful foxglove, as tall, nay, taller than herself, covered with white bells from its top to the very root. Ah! it is a beauty, and Lizzie is quite determined to secure it; but the stem is so tough she cannot break it, so she pulls and pulls until the root

loosens with a sudden jerk, and up it comes, and with it a quantity of loose earth, some grains of which fly straight into poor Lizzie's eyes. -

Oh, dear! what trouble this gives her! She rubs and rubs, and of course makes matters worse, until at last, what between the pain from her eyes, and weariness after all her running and rambling, she throws herself upon the grassy bank and soon falls fast asleep. If the ground was not so damp it would be a pleasant place to sleep in, for the birds are singing overhead, the grasshoppers are chirping as they hop about in the sunshine, and blue dragon-flies are resting on the lilies, or darting in and out among the rushes by the pond.

Presently Lizzie fancies that one of the white lily-buds is growing larger and larger, while its snowy petals gradually unfold, showing the graceful figure of a lovely little lady, dressed in a robe of silvery gauze, spangled with the blue flowers of the forget-me-not. Gazing around her with a queenly air, this beautiful little creature stepped from her floral throne on to one of the large oval lily leaves, then, taking the stem in her hand, she used it as a rudder, and steered her course over the water to that side of the pond near which Lizzie was lying.

The fairy lady did not seem to be at all pleased to see her there; indeed, she frowned and stamped her foot, and showed other signs of being very angry. 'Who,' inquired she, 'is this great idle creature invading my territory, and taking up all this room on the green-sward where I hold my court? She is in the centre of our fairy ring, too! Was such impertinence ever heard of? I cannot reach up to see what she is like, so I must mount my steed and fly round her, that I may have a good view of her enormous body.' Saying this, the fairy sprang lightly upon a large dragon-fly that was waiting near, and, hovering over Lizzie's head, she scanned her features very closely; then seizing one of her eyelashes, she pulled at it with all her might. 'Wake up,' said she, 'wake up; I know very well who you are. You have no right to be here, for

this is "Dreamland," and I am its queen ; so get up at once and leave my dominions.'

'Ah !' said Lizzie, 'pray let me stay. You need not be so cross, for I shall not trouble you in any way. I only want to be quiet, for I am very tired and sleepy.'

'Nonsense,' said the fairy ; 'you cannot be tired. Get up at once, and go, gather your sticks ; your mother is quite weary of waiting for them.'

'I don't care,' said Lizzie ; 'I won't get them. I hate the trouble ; and it is so nice here. I was just feeling very comfortable when you came to disturb me.'

'But it is not good for you to lie long on the damp ground. The dewy grass agrees with us fairies, but to you it will bring sickness and sorrow.'

'I can't help it if it does. I don't feel it in the least damp ; on the contrary, I should be quite comfortable and happy, if you would just go away and let me alone !'

'Such happiness !' sneered the fairy. 'I am sure you were crying just now, for you made such a noise that you awoke me, and I had to come out of my palace to see what could be the matter.'

'Ah ! that was only because I pulled up that nasty foxglove, and some of the loose soil about its roots went into my eyes. But I do not feel it now ; and this mossy bank is so soft and pleasant, I should like to lie here always, and have no work to do, nor any tiresome lessons to learn.'

'What !' said the fairy, 'you do not mean to say that you would like to lie still and do nothing : you certainly must be a very idle creature, and I believe you are, for I know all about you. I often sail up the stream that flows into this pond, to pay a visit to my sister, the spirit of the fountain. She lives close to your mother's gate ; and many a time she and I have looked up into your eyes while you have been lying on the grass gazing into the pond. I have heard your mother call to you and reprove you for being so vain and idle ; and, when she did

so, your face did not make a pretty picture on the water, for you frowned and pouted, and looked quite ugly in your anger at having to go and attend to your work.'

'I hate work,' said Lizzie.

'But that is very wrong. All good little girls like work as well as play.'

'Then I don't want to be a good little girl. I just wish I was not a little girl at all.'

'Ah, indeed! Pray what would you like to be?'

'I don't know. Anything that has very little to do; that may play when it likes, and sleep when it likes, and only wake up to enjoy itself. I should rather like to be a bird, only—'

'Only you cannot be a bird if you wish to be wholly idle,' said the Fairy; 'for birds build their nests, and attend to their families. And even those swallows, which seem to be only amusing themselves by flying to and fro, are busy all the time getting food for their young ones, and are doing man a great service, by clearing the air of myriads of insects, which would otherwise cause him considerable annoyance. No, you cannot be a bird, nor a bee neither; for bees are, as you know, continually busy; and even wasps, though they make no honey, build pretty paper chambers in which the queen wasp lays her eggs, and when the young ones come out they are fed and attended with great care by the whole community. Those tiny ants, whose nest you disturbed when you pulled up the foxglove, make wonderful storehouses for their winter food, which costs them a great deal of labour; and even the mole, which looks so sleepy and stupid, works very hard, burrowing and building long galleries in his own dark region underground. Indeed, I do not know of any creature whose habits are idle enough to suit you; so I advise you to be contented as you are. But stop, now I think of it, there is one that seems to have less to do than many other animals. To me, its style of life would be a great punishment; but you, being so idly disposed, might possibly

enjoy it. You would have sleep enough then—for six months in the year if you like.'

'I know what you mean,' said Lizzie; 'it is a dormouse. But I should not like that, lest I might be caught by an owl or a cat.'

'No; the creature I mean is very well protected from all animals except man; and even when caught by your species, they only nurse it, and pet it, and feed it with the best.'

'Then I think I should like that—just for a while, you know. And I should wish the people who will have the care of me to be rich and great; for I mean to be a lady some day, and it would give me a nice opportunity of seeing the ways of grand houses.'

'Very well,' said the fairy, 'I will manage it for you. But mind it is your own choice, and if you are not happy you must not blame me. Now, go to sleep, and when you wake, you will find yourself as you wish to be.' And with these words the fairy disappeared.

(To be continued.)



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Air—‘All among the Barley.’

THE wintry winds are sighing,
For the days that are gone past ;
And the echoes are replying
To the murmur of the blast.
But for us no voice of sadness
Hath winter's hoary reign ;
For the song of Christmas gladness
Shall soon resound again.

Chorus—Christmas time is coming,
Gladdest of the year ;
We hail thee, merry Christmas,
Oh welcome, welcome here !

Now ivy branches twining,
We wreath a garland green ;
And holly-berries shining,
Peep in and out between.
King Winter, old and hoary,
Gives freely all he can ;
And a flood of Christmas glory
Should cheer the heart of man.

Chorus—Christmas time is coming, etc.

Prepare we joyful greetings

For the friends that are to come :

Let us dream of happy meetings,

And of many a welcome home !

E'en he who dwells in sadness,

By a lonely fireside,

May yet find truest gladness

In the joys of Christmas-tide.

Chorus—Christmas time is coming, etc.

—*School Songs.*

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT.

‘He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord.’—
PROV. xix. 17.

YOU are all looking forward to Christmas time, with its happy meetings and its kind greetings. Your friends will be trying to make you happy; will you try to make others happy? Your friends will be giving you presents; have you any presents to give? The Bible describes such days. It calls them ‘days of gladness and feasting, good days;’ ‘days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.’ It was on a day of public joy that Nehemiah said, ‘Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared.’ This should be done cheerfully. God not only says, ‘Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother,’ but He also says, ‘Thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him.’ God loves ‘a cheerful giver.’—*From ‘Daily Bible Teachings,’ by T. S. Henderson.*

CHRISTMAS ENIGMAS.

I

My first has been wept while the world has slept;
My second's an orb of liquid mould;
My whole on the rose in sunshine glows,
And the leaves of the forest the gem enfold.

2

My first is lily-white, and in the sunshine bright
A fair and spotless thing, earth's purest covering:
My second on the thorn, displayed at break of morn
In countless beads of dew, is pure and shining too:
My whole, when first are heard songs of the early bird,
With downcast eye looks forth, to deck the vernal earth

3

My first in a hero is strong, in a beautiful lady is fair;
Its plural is laurelled in song, and of Britain's the foe
may beware:

My second's a simple invention,—now do not suppose
me in jest,—

Well worth the regard and attention of the weary im-
patient for rest:

While my whole would most surely conduce that rest yet
more grateful to make,

As I prove by the general use we're disposed of its com-
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(The Answers will be found on page 176.)

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FOUND AFLOAT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE LITTLE CAPTAIN,' 'MISS MATTY,'
ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER III.

NDER Mr. Dartmor's eye, Alf Jetsam made great progress with his studies; but under the direction and with the assistance of that gentleman's son, he made even more rapid strides in the pursuit after knowledge—knowledge too of quite a different character, and of a kind that was scarcely likely to please their friends. At an early age, Frank had shown a decided preference for the sea—or rather, it should be said, for the position of an officer in the Royal Navy, with its dashing and romantic associations. Mrs. Dartmor, though she had at first set her face stoutly against it, had in the end been forced to give her consent, upon the condition that Frank should quietly wait, till what she considered a suitable ship could be procured for him, through the interests of some powerful friends. Frank would much rather have gone straight off at once; he hated the delay that caused him to be tied as it were to these disagreeable lessons in the study; but there was no help for it, and to get through the time as easily as possible, he and Alf would take long walks about the coast, and there talk over their future plans, or make scrambling excursions over the rocks in search of birds' nests.

Alf was as determined as Frank to become a sailor; but he kept the idea a strict secret from old Gaskin and his wife, for he had an instinctive feeling that his 'grandfather,' though himself loving the sea, would be

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CAPTAIN CHUNC IN PORT.



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against his boy choosing it as a profession. The truth was, Ned had higher ends in view for his adopted child. But his eyes became open at last to the fact that Alf had some secret thoughts about the sea. He could not fail to observe how his eyes glowed when hearing any narrative of foreign voyage or stirring adventure; and the old man began to be afraid that, by some means or other, his fine projects might be knocked on the head. He inwardly determined that Alf should hear no more 'yarns,' or if he did coax him over—no difficult matter, for it had become almost a necessity of Ned's life to spin yarns—he should hear nothing but tales of hardship and danger. Ned fancied that the boy would be so frightened thereby, that, if he was cherishing any such notions, he would give them up entirely. It had quite the opposite effect, however; for somehow those thrilling stories seemed to touch a congenial chord in Alf's heart, and he longed to be in the midst of those very scenes which Ned pictured so graphically.

Dolly, too, could not help seeing that the boy was restless, and changed from what he used to be, and it grieved her honest heart greatly. When a child, Alf had often been passionate and wayward, but his temper never lasted long where Dolly was concerned,—a few gentle words of reproof were quite enough to make him penitent. But after the scene in the vicarage schoolroom, the boy's temper was quite altered; he was never passionate now, but he was fretful and restless at home, and out of doors his spirits rose to such a high pitch, that he seemed to be unable to control himself. No boy of his age in the whole village could equal him in feats of daring, or climb to such a dizzy height on the rocks in search of eggs. In vain Ned threatened punishment, and Dolly expostulated; Alf would not listen, but returned the same answer always, 'No fear of me, granny, I'll take great care;' but after he was out of the old people's sight, he would say with a laugh to a companion, 'If I do get killed some day, what then? I belong to nobody, so it doesn't matter what

becomes of me. Paupers don't often come to harm, do they?' he would add, thinking of what Ada Dartmor had said.

Once Dolly had hopes that her little foundling would turn out a good child. He liked nothing better than to sit and listen to the Bible stories she could tell so well, and was always attentive to her instructions. But now it was different; instead of listening quietly as before, he would either make an excuse to get away, or fall into one of his fractious humours. She fancied Ned might have helped her, had he chosen; but instead, he justified the boy's behaviour. 'It was quite natural the lad should hate to be preached at,' he said, 'mayhap he had plenty of it at the parsonage; but there was no doubt he would attend to the Bible lessons when he was older. And though he was rather wild and different of late, why, a lad must grow; and, for his own part, he liked him all the better for not being a milkop.'

At last Alf's secret became one no longer. Dolly, who happened one day to be in search of a hen that she supposed to be laying away amongst the rocks, came accidentally on Alf and Frank Dartmor, seated together in earnest conversation. She was arrested by hearing Frank talking in an excited tone of voice, evidently expostulating with his companion about something of consequence, and she was startled by hearing Frank say, 'Now Alf, my boy, you'll take my advice, and wait till I'm made a captain, then you shall come into my own ship. It won't do for you to go into a merchantman or low coaster; think how vexed old Gaskin would be; and indeed, for that matter, I don't believe he'll ever consent to your going to sea at all.'

'I know that, Frank; but go to sea I must and shall,' said Alf, drawing in his lips in a determined way. 'You see there is no help for it,—I must just run away. I mean to get aboard some ship bound for India; for ever since that old gentleman came down to make inquiries about the wreck, and to have a look at me, I can't get it

out of my head that my true parents are alive, and that I may find them there. At any rate, I should like to be sure if I *do* belong to anybody or no.'

'Now Alf, I see how it is, you've never got over those hasty words of Ada's. It's nonsense to mind what a girl says; and I'm sure poor Ada has repented of her folly long ago, so it's sort of mean to keep up hard thoughts against her. Why, as to belonging to anybody, can't you be content with your grandfather and grandmother? Very worthy people they are, too,' said Frank, loftily, who sometimes spoke unconsciously in a tone of voice the very same as his father's. 'Now, don't interrupt me,' he continued; 'of course, I am quite aware they are not your *real* grandparents. I am not just a noodle, Master Jetsam; but answer me this question: Could they have been kinder to you if they *had* been?'

Before Alf could answer, Dolly stood before the astonished boys, her ruddy cheeks a little pale, and her honest eyes dim with tears. 'Thank you, Master Frank, for your words,' she said, her voice trembling a little. 'We've tried to make him happy, for we loved him; but now it seems he's going to repay us by running away, as if he could trust us no more.'

Alf could not stand the tone of reproach, and, regardless of the presence of Frank, he flung his arms round his grandmother, as he said, 'Granny, it wasn't because I didn't trust you that I was going to run away; you know it wasn't, now, but just because I thought grandad would not let me; and I thought, too, when it came to the last, perhaps you'd take it to heart so, that I'd never be able to say good-bye, so I fancied it best to slip away.'

By this time Alf's tears were falling as fast as Dolly's were, and under these circumstances it was perfectly impossible to be angry with him; but she fancied that now would be the time to change him from his purpose; so, stroking the head that was still as thick with curls as when it was laid on her breast that night of the storm, she said, 'My boy, ye surely don't want to leave us yet; you'll

not vex us, Alf; but stay with grannie like a good child. Oh, my deary! I couldn't be happy without my curly-haired boy.'

At these words Alf shook himself gently free from the kind embrace, and dashing the tears hastily from his eyes with his jacket sleeve, he answered, 'Grannie, I would stay if I could; but I want to find my mother. I know I shall find her if I try, for she comes to me in my sleep, and speaks to me; and it seems so real, that when I waken and find it all a dream, I am almost wild with sorrow. You tell me I am changed, it is that that makes me so different. I can't help fretting; I try to be good, and forget it, but I can't. Sometimes for a little I do, when I am scrambling up the rocks, or away out in the boat as far as I can get from the shore; then the sound of the waves drowns my sad thoughts; but yet I cannot be happy doing nothing to find my parents.'

This speech troubled Dolly greatly, for Alf had seldom or ever spoken about his origin; and when the gentleman had come to make inquiries about him, he had shown no anxiety upon the subject, apparently being rather pleased than otherwise when he took his departure, saying, that it was evident Alf was not the boy he was in search of. It proved, indeed, that the boy in question was an orphan sent home from the West Indies to his English relations, whereas it was by that time perfectly well ascertained that little Alf was an Eastern child, as the shipwrecked vessel was understood to be the 'Tigris,' from Canton.

The old woman sat down and covered her face with her white linen apron, and turned the matter over in her mind. Was it God who was putting those thoughts into the lad's head? Was it nature crying out and refusing to be satisfied? If such were really the case, was it for her, a poor, weak woman, to stand in the way and raise objections? Dolly had often, when Alf was younger, pictured to herself the anguished looks of his parents, when the tidings of the wreck reached them. How often his mother would think of him, Dolly knew well; and if he

was supposed to be drowned, how she would recall the looks of her little child, and the soft prattle of his voice, and wish, oh, so earnestly, that she had never parted with him! Yes, Dolly understood all the parents' feelings, and her kind heart longed to restore little Alf to their arms. But could it possibly be supposed that there were really any parents of his now alive; else, why had they not made more inquiries after him? They must have known the ship by which he came, and could surely have traced it out if they were still alive; at all events, they surely must be people of no consequence, when they made so little stir in the world. However, Dolly came to the conclusion that, alive or not, she had nothing to do with it; nor was it for her to consider how Alf was to find them. All that she was required to do was to give up the boy willingly, nay, even cheerfully, whatever it should cost her. Such were Dolly's meditations, and when she uncovered her face, the boys were surprised to find her quite composed.

'Alfy, dear, I see how it is now,' she said gently. 'It's in Providence that you are to leave us, and He knows where your friends are. Mayhap they have prayed to Him to bring you back to them. I see now it is natural for ye to get restless. But, boy, if you do go out into the world to look for your mother, never forget that God is watching you. If you turn from Him, He will turn from you; but if you keep faithful to the teaching you have got from our good parson, and never allow yourself to fall into bad habits, then, Alf, I feel certain you will find them, if they are still in the land of hope. Now, honey, go, and pray to Him to help you, and I will see what can be done with your grandfather.'

Little Alf turned at once, and bidding Frank good-bye, he went into the house, and climbed up the trap stair into his little room in the garret, and pondered in his heart these words of Dolly's. He had never himself understood why it was he wanted to go to sea so much. He had liked the idea of the adventures he would have

in searching for his parents; but now he saw things in a new light. He felt almost like one of those wonderful crusaders that he had read so much about to little Madge; and though he was not going to fight exactly, still, it was a grand object. While Alf was sitting on his bed, making all sorts of resolutions to be a good lad for the future, and to devote his life to the search after his parents, while at the same time he vowed never to forget those who had fostered him and been his kindest friends, Dolly was engaged down stairs with her husband, trying to lay the matter in all its 'bearings' before that veteran seaman. She had, unfortunately, chosen a very bad time for such an object, for Ned had fallen asleep over his pipe in his large chair, during her absence, and his mental faculties were in rather a confused condition; so that Dolly had to repeat her statements two or three times without much effect.

But when he had come to his full senses, and understood the true state of the case, he leant back in his chair looking bewildered; then, as what he considered the absurdity of the whole thing dawned upon him, he gave a long whistle, then a low laugh and a chuckle, as he replied, 'Well, well; this be the queerest idea that ever came athwart me yet; a lad going in search of his mother and father without knowing what port to steer for,—ha! ha! ha! I'm glad that the "Dove, of Cardiff," is a-lying snug down in the harbour, and that Captain Chuncck is a-looking after the unloading of her at this very minute; for it needs a man of his knowledge to understand the notions them young craft like our Alf is always a-taking. Hallo, youngster!' he shouted to Alf, in a hoarse guttural voice, 'be you aloft, there? If so, come down and let me overhaul this here business.'

But when Alf had presented himself in the kitchen, Ned found that he could get no words to express his feelings; so, shaking his head in a doleful manner, he said, 'No, this here is for a more knowinger head than Ned Gaskin's. Here, little chap, see and tog yourself out

a bit. Wife, give him out his white ducks, and his blue jacket and new hat. We'll have to go down to the bay to see his godfather, the captain, about this here consarn.'

It was drawing towards the afternoon when Ned, followed closely by Alf, came in sight of the harbour, where the 'Dove' lay alongside the jetty. The crew, which consisted of a mate, one man, and a boy, were busy along with some paid labourers unloading the cargo, which consisted at that time of grain and sundries from an Irish port; for although Hurstcliff was but a small harbour, the neighbouring town of Tottenham rendered it of greater importance, and it was constantly occupied by various coasting craft in addition to the native fishing boats.

Captain Chunck, whenever he came into a harbour, immediately put on his long-shore clothes, which consisted of a pair of bright but exceedingly wrinkled wellington boots,—an olive-green swallow-tailed coat, of the glossiest broadcloth, creased with careful preservation, and very short in the waist, with the cuffs turned well up for their protection,—a black satin waistcoat, that displayed to advantage his white shirt front, and stiff silk stock; but the consummation of all was a very hard and tight-looking tall hat, that was perched in a jaunty way on the back of his head. He was sitting on the ledge of the small afterhatch, with his legs hanging down into the hold, and was addressing some most emphatic orders to the men at work, when he was arrested by the sight of Ned and his companion. Ned at once swung himself on board by a rope, and stepped up to where the Captain sat. The latter, on seeing his friend approach, gave a sort of look of recognition, something between a scowl and a grin, but he did not rise in the least to accost his visitor, nor did Ned expect any such courtesy; indeed, had he treated him with downright rudeness, it is probable Ned would have respected him all the more.

'Good afternoon, Captain,' said Ned, seating himself opposite to Captain Chunck, with his legs down the

hatch also, while Alf stood deferentially aside at the rigging by the gangway. 'I've made free for to come at this here time to consult you about this boy of our'n. You was so kind, Cap'n, as in a sort o' a way to allow yourself to stand godfather to him, seeing as how ye were the only man in them parts that could give him a proper name; and now, I've gôt to ax ye another favour, and, I must own, requiring a power o' thought, more than this old headpiece is fit for.'

'Out with it, shipmate; I be uncommon busy,' answered the Captain, in his gruffest tone.

'I know'd I was coming at a awk'ard moment, Cap'n; but as I said to my missus, "Dolly," says I, "Cap'n Chunk will be occupied with his cargo, but I know he'll excuse an old shipmate for not bein' able to put this here matter off, when I tell him that it made me feel oneasy, and sort o' queerish belike roun' about the heart.'"

'Well, if it's ought as can be settled by fair right-down looking into,' said the Captain, in a gruffer tone than ever, 'Peter Chunk's your man. So go ahead, messmate, without no more hitches.' This invitation Ned took all in good part, and immediately proceeded to tell him, as briefly as possible, the notion his godson had taken.

Now Captain Chunk was in reality much interested in his godson, though after an uncouth fashion of his own, but neither old Ned nor the boy had any suspicion of the fact, but imagined that it was the reverse—in short, that the master of the 'Dove' had rather a prejudice towards him. Alf would have been very much surprised had he been told that the Captain occasionally thought of him when at sea. In those vacant hours when he had nothing else to do, if the breeze was fair, or the Channel waters wrapped in a particularly stagnant calm, he would begin to meditate on any subject that troubled his mind. The awful responsibility undertaken by a godfather was a thing which he more than once repented of at these

times ; but his ideas were few, and he dwelt on them so slowly, as to be often obliged to leave them half way in order to carry through his practical duties. But dull though he was, he did not fail to notice, when from time to time he paid a visit at the cottage, Alf's eagerness for tales of the sea ; and, long before this, he had come to the conclusion that his godson would be a sailor. Ned's mind was full of the notion that Alf would turn out great through his parents ; but Captain Chunch's idea was that, if he became famous at all, it would be through his own merits, for the Captain had a high opinion of Alf's abilities. If any one had been looking closely into Captain Chunch's face while Ned was speaking, they might have seen a gleam of satisfaction pass over it ; but Ned was so certain that his friend would be of the same way of thinking, namely, that a shore-going life was the most suitable for Alf, that he was not in the least troubled or suspicious. When Ned was done speaking, the Captain turned suddenly to Alf, and said, ' Boy, come here ; what has made you take this here notion ? '

Alf blushed, and moved uneasily from one foot to another, but looked up and said, ' I want to see foreign countries—and—to be a sailor. '

' But boy,' said Captain Chunch, fixing Alf with his weather eye, ' your grandad here tells me you mean to go in search o' your lawful parents. Where do you steer for ? where's your port ? '

Alf had to own again that he knew nothing about the port, but that he meant to try India and China ; he fancied he must find them somewhere. Captain Chunch said no more, but he rose slowly up, and when he was safely on his feet, he looked over his shoulder, and said to Ned, in a morose and sombre tone of voice, ' Come below a minute, shipmate ; ' adding, as he led down the companion-way, ' Go for'ard till I call you, youngster. ' Sitting in the very limited space the Captain styled ' the cabin,' the two discussed the matter further over a quiet pipe ; when, with no little difficulty, and long pauses, Ned discovered

that Captain Chunk was giving it as his solemn advice to send the boy to sea on a trial voyage, with a captain who would take some pains to show him what sort of a life a sailor's really was, the intention being to make him sick of the sea for ever. In conclusion, the Captain screwed up his weather eye very tight, and looked sideways at his companion in a very significant manner, as if to imply there was entire confidence between them.

Ned was somewhat bewildered at the way matters were turning, but he could not help seeing the wisdom of the thing either. 'Mayhap you're right, Captain, after all,' he reluctantly admitted. 'I know well how it is with young folks; when once they take a notion into their heads, they'll carry it through in spite o' reason. But where is this cap'n to be found that will do as much for the youngster?' asked Ned, as he rubbed his head and his knee alternately. Captain Chunk, however, would advise no further; and Ned having relighted his pipe to assist him out of the difficulty, they sat and smoked on in profound silence.

At last, Ned having come to the end of his tobacco, suddenly slapped his hand on his thigh, which startled the Captain apparently from a stolen snooze. 'Cap'n,' said Ned in a whisper, as if he were afraid somebody was listening, 'couldn't you take the boy yourself?'

Now this might or might not have been in accordance with the Captain's own mind; he simply answered, however, 'Me take the boy! I'm full; plenty o' hands already. No, it can't be done!'

'Not to oblige a messmate, Cap'n, who helped you out o' many a scrape when you was a youngster?' said Ned, coaxingly; and as he saw that his words were having some slight effect upon the Captain's grim visage, he continued: 'My old missus, she'll be like to cry her eyes out at parting wi' the boy, but she'd weather it out better if she know'd he was with a friend, and that friend none other than Cap'n Peter Chunk o' the "Dove," the boy's own godfather.'

After a good deal of grumbling about the trouble and responsibility, Captain Chunck at last allowed himself to be persuaded, and Alf was called down into the cabin to hear his fate. Ned was perfectly shocked at the boy's behaviour, for he showed no gratitude for the Captain's kindness, but stood pouting his lip and twirling his hat round and round, till Ned, for the first time, almost felt inclined to beat him. 'Can't you say, "thank'ee, Cap'n?" Are you not ashamed o' yourself, Alf Jetsam, a-standing there a-saying nothing? or be you so much obliged that ye can't find words to express your feelin's?' said Ned, as if to cover the boy's want of manners.

Alf fancied a berth aboard the 'Dove' a very commonplace idea indeed, and not at all what he had bargained for. But at this point the Captain came to Ned's assistance, and for a moment was almost eloquent, as, in rather a rough manner, he told Alf that if what he wanted was to be a seaman worth his salt, and, what was more, a navigator to foreign parts, he ought to begin at the right end. 'There was no school going like the British coasting trade.' Here he stopped short and frowned most savagely, as if from not knowing how to finish the argument he had embarked upon; only adding, that 'if his godson liked to try it with him, he would be under the eye of a friend who would teach him à wrinkle or two.' Old Ned here chimed in with eagerness to enforce this reasoning, thus putting himself in the somewhat false position of an advocate for Alf's own chosen profession.

Alf, being a shrewd boy of his years, thereupon yielded to the proposal, which on the whole was favourable to his views, and the interview ended. At parting, Ned said, 'You'll see that the boy is well grounded as a seaman, Cap'n;' and he added, with a knowing wink, when Alf was out of sight, 'Give it him strong, Chunck. In course you'll not overdo it, for the lad's bones be not grown yet, but just such a taste as to make him sick of the sea for life.'

(To be continued.)



WEE WILLIE'S SLEEP.

WHERE a' his lane wee Willie sleeps,
 The ivy o'er his pillow creeps :
 His curtain is the beechen spray,
 Atween its chinks the night beams stray.
 The stars that wander up the skies,
 They only ken where Willie lies.

When morning fires the forest dim,
 The robin choirs wee Willie's hymn :
 The mavis, when she seeks her nest,
 At eve for Willie sings her best.
 At noon the croodlin cushat's plain,
 Where wee wee Willie sleeps his lane.

The violet offers incense there,
 Her sapphire brow wi' dew-draps fair :
 The gossamere has twined a thread
 For viewless hands o'er Willie's head ;
 And angels fauld their pinions twain,
 Where wee wee Willie sleeps his lane !

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SKETCHES IN INDIA.

HOMeward BOUND.

'In the sultry jungles of dark Hindostan,
While wanted, yet worn I roam,
How oft my heart in my own native land,
Far away, among visions of home!
Where the many wave in each river and rill,
To me is the fairest that flows;
Where the breath of the blast on the brown heather hill
Is the sweetest, the freshest, that blows!

While listless and lonely I pant for the breeze,
In the feverish fens of Bengal,
While drooping and damp are the leaves on the trees
That hang o'er yon moss-covered wall;
Oh, what would I give just to breathe once again
The blast as it blows over Yair!
To quaff, as they glide down the dear native glen,
Tweed's waters, so cool and so fair!

THESE lines, written by one who had been long an exile, well express the feelings with which the thought of 'home—sweet home' fills many a heart in India; therefore those of my readers who have accompanied my steps in that far land will, no doubt, wish me to lead them home again, and will have pleasure in joining me as I take my place on board the steamer, which is puffing and blowing in the beautiful harbour of Bombay, ready to convey us to our native land. We go by the overland route; but you must not think that we shall go over much land on our way, for it is all a sea voyage, except during one day, when we cross over the land of Egypt.

To those who are blest with happy homes, the return to them is often the pleasantest part of going abroad;

and this was the feeling of some of my fellow-passengers ; but with others it was very different. There were in the ship sick persons who had lost their health, and mourners who had lost dear friends in India ; there were wives parting from husbands, and children from parents ; and many tears were shed at the last look of Bombay. A dear little girl, whom I shall call Annie, sat lonely and sad on the deck in her new black frock. She had just lost her mother, and had parted from her father. She came to my cabin, and we had many interesting talks together. She told me all her sorrow, and said, 'I shall never, never forget my own dear mamma !' When Sunday came, she brought me her Bible and prayer-book, and said, 'I will learn the gospel of the day for you, as I used to do for my mamma ;' and she learned and repeated it beautifully to me.

We were in a very large steamer, containing a great number of passengers, and a much greater number of sailors, both white and black. On the Sundays there was a very nice service on deck, or in the great saloon. There was no minister on board, but the captain acted as clergyman, and read prayers ; and besides the passengers, there were all the officers of the ship and all the English sailors present, looking very nice in their clean, white, Sunday clothes, and joining in the service very attentively. We were a week in going from Bombay to Aden, and another week from Aden to Suez. If you will take the map, you will easily be able to trace the voyage. It was very pleasant sailing over the bright blue sunny sea, watching the glorious colours of the sunrise or sunset, or enjoying the cool night breeze and the brilliant moonlight ; but after we had passed Aden, and got into the Red Sea, the heat became fearful,—much worse than India.

Aden is a curious place, in the southern corner of Arabia, which belongs to England, and is one of the places where the steamer stops to take in coals. It is surrounded by the barest, wildest rocks I ever saw, and neither grass nor trees are to be seen there. A number

of natives came out in canoes from the shore, and called to us, begging us to throw sixpences into the sea for them. Some of the gentlemen did so, and it was very amusing to see how they immediately jumped overboard, dived to the bottom of the clear, deep water, and picked them up. Some of them came on board selling ostrich feathers, ostrich eggs, and sea shells. They wore scarcely any clothes, but seemed very particular about dressing their hair according to their notions of fashion and elegance, which consisted in plastering it over with a kind of clay which made it red, and then sticking it all out in little tufts like horns! They are from Africa, and are called Somallees,—a wild savage race. I saw one of them get into a furious passion with his son, and it was dreadful to see how fierce he looked, and how cruelly he beat the poor boy; I was so glad I had not bought any of his shells. But, after all, he was only a poor ignorant heathen, and had never been taught, as we have been, to restrain his passions.

After remaining some hours at Aden, we passed the Straits of Bab el Mandeb, and entered the Red Sea, which, I need not tell you, is no redder than any other sea,—indeed, I thought it particularly blue. Sometimes we sailed near enough the shore to see it very plainly. We saw the town of Mocha very well, and beyond it the country seemed full of high mountains. Mocha, you know, is famous for its coffee, said to be the best in the world. At last we came to the peninsula of Sinai, and sailed a whole Sunday in sight of the grand mountains, among which stands Mount Sinai itself. Little Annie and I found out and read all those passages in the Bible which described the giving of the Law upon that awful mountain, where God himself spoke to His servant Moses out of the cloud. The mountains were all just the same as they must have been then,—all bare and wild and rocky, with the golden sunshine and the blue shadows upon their lonely heights; and the thought of the great host of the children of Israel sojourning among them,

where there was no food and no water to be had, made us see plainly that they could never have lived there, if God had not sent them manna, and opened the rock, so that the waters gushed out.

Then, as our ship came near the head of the Red Sea, we saw the place where God led His own people through its waters, and where the host of Pharaoh with all their chariots and horses followed in their pride, and were overwhelmed :

‘Thou didst blow with Thy wind,
The sea covered them :
They sank as lead in the mighty waters.
Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods ?
Who is like Thee ?
Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises,
Doing wonders.’

Much would I have liked to have seen something of the ancient land of Egypt, so famous for its ancient monuments, and still more famous in Bible history; but it could not be. When we arrived at Suez, we were told that the other steamer was already waiting for us at Alexandria; so we were immediately put into the train about the middle of the night, and were hurried through in the darkness, seeing nothing of the desert, nothing of picturesque Cairo, and arriving at Alexandria about noon next day, when we discovered that, after all, we were not to sail till next morning, and need not have been so hurried! However, we were glad to see a little of Alexandria; and I enjoyed driving through this town, which seems a curious mixture of eastern and western, ancient and modern life. Its bazaars are as quaint and oriental as if they had been lifted out of the times of the Arabian Nights, while its newer streets are full of Frenchified shops, and ladies dressed in Paris fashions. We went to see Pompey's Pillar, a fine tall column, nearly a hundred feet high. It was first climbed by a party of merry English sailors, who got a rope to the top by flying a kite over it. We also visited another tall monument called Cleopatra's Needle. Neither it nor the pillar have any-

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thing to do with either Pompey or Cleopatra, far less with needlework. They are, however, very ancient, and seem to look down with wonder and amazement at the new world around them, and at all the travellers who come from far-away regions to take a look at them. We took a walk by the Nile, or at least a little bit of the Nile, for it flows into the sea by a multitude of small branches, as you will see by the map; still I liked to think that this stream was a bit of the very Nile among whose bulrushes the little ark of Moses once lay! The sky was no doubt as bright and glowing in the sunset over him as over us, and the wind was whispering the same music in the bulrushes, and the white birds were flying overhead, and the boats might be resting on their quiet shadows in the water, and yet how many, many hundreds of years have passed, and the story of the infant Moses and his believing mother has never been forgotten, and never will be, because it stands recorded in God's own Word of truth!

We left Alexandria early next day; but I have still so much to tell you of the rest of the voyage, that I find I must delay the arrival in England to another number.

THE LITTLE BALLAD-SINGER.



It was the last night of the year,—a dull, dark, dreary night,—the snow was falling dreamily; no moon was visible, no bright stars shot out from amongst the fast scudding clouds, and people were hurrying through the streets, hastening to some merry gathering, to usher in the New Year, or perhaps to the quietude and comfort of their own bright firesides. All but one poor solitary child, who wandered alone in her scanty clothing, with bare head and naked feet, dragging the tattered shawl more closely around her shivering form, and plaintively, with sweet but tremulous voice, singing one of her oft-sung ballads, in hopes of gaining a few halfpence to purchase her scanty supper.

Perhaps she hoped the hearts of men might be fuller of generous impulse on this New Year's eve; but if so, the coming storm had chilled them back to selfishness, for little heed was taken of her; no lingering crowd gathered as usual to listen to her song, and the feeble voice warbled its last stanza in a deserted square. All day she had roamed the streets, chanting her stock of ballads, but never earned a penny. Cold, destitute, and hungry, she crept along, until she came to a large house looking grander than its neighbours, with its handsome portico over the door, and broad spreading steps. Lights streamed from the windows, and merry laughter sounded, telling of a bright, genial scene within. She thought, surely there was plenty here, she might venture to ask an alms; so, stepping softly up, she tapped at the glass door, from which she could view all the brightness of luxuriance and wealth. She saw the hall decked with evergreens and lamps; servants bustling from room to room; and at that moment the lady of the house descending the spacious staircase, ready to receive her guests.

Poor little Jeannie's eyes glistened when she beheld the gorgeous velvet dress, with its sweeping train, and all the glitter of precious jewellery; and she thought that one so rich must surely be good, and ready to help, so ventured to give a second tap, whereon the lady started, uttered a little shriek, and ordered the footman to send away 'that little horrid beggar child.'

'Only a penny, my lady, only a penny,' pleaded Jeannie. 'I have had no food all day, am cold and faint. Only a penny.' But the indignant lady drew her robe aside, lest any contamination might fall from closer contact; and Jeannie, not waiting to be thrust away, turned with brimming eyes, and hastily descended the steps.

Carriages now came dashing up, and she held out her hand as each gaily-attired visitor descended; but all turned aside disdainfully or heedlessly from her, and entered the house of gaiety and pleasure. Wearied and wretched, she sat down on the end of the lowest step,

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and leaned her aching head against the ornamental pillar of the portico. Soon the exhausted limbs relaxed, the heavy eyelids drooped, then closed in sleep.

The snow continued to fall heavily; many carriages came and went; the sound of music, dancing, and laughter, burst from the merry-making party; but Jeannie never stirred. Hour after hour passed, and then the deep strokes of midnight chimed, and the loud peal of many bells burst suddenly through the heavy air, proclaiming the death of the old year, the life of the new. Death and life! Ay, such it was with little Jeannie, who slept so calmly in her shroud of snow. She, too, had heard the sound of chariots—of angels' rejoicing voices; and the bells that rang such a merry peal on earth for the new-born year, had echoed through the vaults of heaven, proclaiming the birth of a life to immortality!

Jeannie was found by the early watch, frozen and dead. None claimed the poor friendless child, so they laid her in a pauper's grave. The doctor said she had died from cold and want—died when a penny might have saved her for *that* night, or the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yet none laid it to their conscience, not even the wealthy lady, within whose spacious house had met that gay and brilliant assemblage, whilst the poor neglected ballad-singer lay dying outside. It was a startling contrast, from which a lesson may be learned. The world rang with congratulations for a happy New Year, as she, happier than any, sang her first jubilee song in heaven.

My dear little friends, in the midst of your Christmas rejoicings,—in the plenty and comfort the New Year continues to *you*, whilst seated in the glow of your bright fireside, surrounded by loving friends,—forget not the houseless poor, grudge not the penny to the sad-hearted, desolate wanderer, remember 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'

'Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me.'

L. O.

STORIES ABOUT BIRDS

THE ROBIN.



CHRISTMAS time has come again!

Snow is on the ground; bright scarlet berries are peeping out amongst the glossy evergreen leaves of the holly, brightening up the leafless hedges and hawthorn-trees, and affording a pleasant repast to many of our 'winter friends.'

But hark! what's that tap, tap, tap on the window-pane? Ah, it is a little black-eyed robin at the glass, come to wish you all a 'merry Christmas, and happy New Year.'

Sociable little robin! Other birds may fly away at your approach, but he loves you all. Open your windows a moment, despite the cold air, and see if robin

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won't hop in and share your sports, or put in his sweet note in the midst of the pretty 'Christmas carol' you are singing to papa and mamma—

'In the east the grey light
Prophecies the morn;
Up, and hail the daylight;
Christ the Lord is born.'

But even if robin prefers to remain outside, be sure and scatter plenty of crumbs for him, that he and the other little birds may have a good dinner on Christmas day. In some parts of Germany they fasten a large sheaf of corn to a pole on that day, so that all the little birds in the neighbourhood may come and feast.

All children love robin-redbreasts. Was it not these kind little birds who covered the 'babes in the wood' with leaves? I dare say all my little readers, who reside in the country, have some story they could tell of a pet robin. Well do I remember, when I was a child, how an old gardener used to show me any robins' nests he could find. Robins love to build close to the ground; and one nest, I especially remember, was built on the branch of a small fir-tree which had been cut down. There were five eggs in it, white, speckled with a reddish brown colour. And once a pair of robins took a fancy to build inside the sleeve of a coat which belonged to that same old gardener, which he had taken off and hung up on a low bush whilst he was at work. When the old man discovered that the birds were building, he left his coat hanging, partly from a wish not to disturb the birdies, but also, I am sure, to have the pleasure of showing us children the curious nest.

But I am going to tell you some anecdotes of a robin, which lived in a garden of a country-house near the old city of St. Andrews.

There were several young people who lived in the house, and to them robin was much attached. No sooner did they make their appearance in the garden, than 'Cheep, cheep,' and robin was at their side, now sitting on a bush

close beside them, now hopping on the ground at their feet, watching their movements, and always trying to attract their attention. One day, none of his friends having been out of doors, robin became very fidgety, flew round and round the garden, and at last determined to seek his favourites, and find out the cause of their absence; so, seeing an open window, he flew in. It proved to be a bedroom into which robin had entered, and finding no one there, he perched on the top of the bed, and waited patiently. Presently one of his friends came into the room, unconscious of robin's presence, and was astonished at hearing a loud cheep, and on looking up saw robin perched on the bed. He no sooner caught sight of her, than he flew to her, and wheeling round and round her head, seemed to invite her to come out to the garden. One day a loud lamentation was heard, for one of the children had discovered a dead robin under a bush. No doubt was entertained that it was their pet one; and getting a pasteboard box, robin was laid in it preparatory to being buried. Just as they were placing the dead bird in the box, a 'cheep, cheep' was heard, and looking up, they recognised, close beside them, their own robin alive and well, watching their proceedings with wonder, and eyeing with amazement the dead bird. From that time it became tamer than ever; but alas! truth compels me to tell you that poor little robin fell a victim to a cat, and all that was found of it was a few feathers.

Robin is a constant friend. He does not treat us as the swallow,—fly off and leave us when winter comes; not he. When the snow lies the thickest, then is the time we see most of him and his orange red breast; and it is on leafless branches that robin sings his sweetest ditty, teaching us the lesson, that we too should sing songs of praise, not only when all is bright around us, but even when, to our eyes, the sun has ceased to shine, and the clouds are thick around us. So scatter the crumbs freely, and let robin get a good Christmas dinner as a reward

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for his faithfulness ; and when summer days come again, perhaps robin will bring some of his little ones to visit the kind friends who fed him in the cold winter months, when the snow lay white around.

‘ Little children are you singing
Robin-like your lays ?
Through the tangled hedgerows winging,
Arrow flights of praise.
Carol on ! and wake the morning
With your notes of joy,
Take the robin redbreast’s warning,
Praise be your employ.’

M. H.

IDOLS OF THE HEART.

AN ADDRESS.

BY THE REV. GEORGE COOK, BATHGATE.



THE Apostle John, who is in Holy Scripture called ‘ the disciple whom Jesus loved,’ has written, we believe, for the warning of God’s dear children in all time, the words, ‘ Little children, keep yourselves from idols.’

It may not be easy to decide whether these warnings were really intended for the young of Christ’s flock, or for such as the Apostle Paul calls ‘ babes in Christ,’ i.e. those who had been recently made disciples. They are full of instruction to all, especially to the young, who are entering on the temptations and trials of the Christian life, even although they may have been carefully instructed in saving truths ; for St. John addressed them to those, of whom he writes as follows : ‘ And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true ; and we are in’—or, by knowing, are joined to—‘ Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.’

We also have great cause to bless God, who hath given us this knowledge of Himself, and of Jesus Christ—of eternal life. One might hope that, having such precious knowledge to guide them, God's dear children would not be in danger of going astray. Experience, however, teaches us otherwise; and that it is well still to address these solemn words to those—to the young especially—who have received the knowledge of saving truth: 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.'

We propose, therefore, to consider what the idols are, against which the holy apostle so lovingly warns God's children, in order to find out the danger they may incur of going after, or giving themselves to, idols—forsaking the true God, and so casting away eternal life.

'What are idols?' Generally, they are described as representations of human beings, of animals, or figures intended to illustrate the fruitfulness and bounty of nature, before which, as symbols of the Great God and Ruler of nature, men bow down and worship.

When St. John wrote the warning we are considering, the most enlightened nations of the world were idolaters. As St. Paul grieved over the great city of Athens, 'wholly given to idolatry,' perhaps the most intelligent of the people looked on the beautiful forms, before which they worshipped, only as representations of the gods in whom they believed, as the Roman Catholics now offer prayers before images or pictures of our blessed Saviour. But, doubtless, the mass of the people worshipped these images as gods.

In those days, the Jews alone, of all nations, worshipped the true God, and abhorred idols.

Many of the Jews had become Christians, and also, multitudes of heathen idolaters had turned from idols to serve the living God. Still, St. John knew that they might be drawn away to follow idols, and therefore he wrote, both to Jewish and Gentile Christians, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' We may conclude, then, that there were other idols besides graven images and

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marble statues, to the worship of which God's children might be drawn away in those times. We shall consider this further, by-and-bye. In our times, the most polished and enlightened nations have abandoned the worship of images, and representations of God, and profess to worship Him, 'who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth.'

We have ourselves, however, lived for many years in countries where almost all the people worship representations of human beings, beasts, and reptiles, often of the most hideous and grotesque appearance, and even mere stocks and stones, distinguished by nothing more than a daub of bright red paint. We have often seen in lonely jungles, by the wayside, or in humble villages, a little shed, in which was set up a hideous clay or stone image, or a mere block of rough rock, daubed with vermilion, and hung with garlands of flowers, and the poor people, as they passed, all bowed down reverently before the idol. We have entered lofty and gorgeous temples, or great and solemn caves dug out of the rock, where long rows of richly carved pillars led to the shrines of huge, unnatural, or sometimes very grand and beautiful images, cut also from the *living* rock, before which the ignorant natives of those countries offered gifts, and worshipped. In our enlightened country, such things are unknown, or read of with wonder and pity.

Yet I have no doubt that the holy apostle's words are intended for us also: 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' There must, therefore, be some other kind of idols to which we are in danger of giving ourselves, or of worshipping and serving.

Let us consider what are the idols against which St. John still warns us, lest we forsake the true God and eternal life, for their service and worship. *That*, whatever it be, is an idol to us, which holds the first place in our hearts and affections—which we think more about, and love better, than 'the true God and eternal life.' What said our blessed Lord? 'Take heed and beware of covetousness,' and, 'Ye cannot serve God and *mammon*.' St.

Paul explains what Jesus meant in these words, when he wrote as follows : 'Mortify therefore (or destroy in you) covetousness, which is idolatry ;' and he calls a covetous man, or one who loves money, 'an idolater,' or worshipper of idols.

Thus, the *love* of money is an idol which many serve ; and the splendid banking-houses, which ornament our cities, are idol temples to many who enter them. In like manner, those, whether they be little children, or grown men and women, who are only occupied with their dress and their pleasures and amusements, may truly be said to worship idols.

Many who are what is termed *selfish*, make idols of themselves ; and to worship oneself is the worst kind of idolatry, because it draws us farthest from, and makes us most unlike, the Son of God, our blessed Saviour, whom all God's true and dear children must be like, and 'must walk in love, even as He also loved us, and gave Himself for us.' Thus St. Paul writes to us : 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification ; for even Christ, who was equal with God, pleased not Himself.' And we read that He said to God, His Father, 'Lo I come : I delight to do Thy will, O my God.' We ought to give ourselves to Him, as 'He gave Himself for us,' because He suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.' He taught us that anything dear and precious to us, even as a right eye or hand, if it drew our hearts away from God, must be cast from us ; because it is better that, through suffering, self-denial, and loss of what we once held very dear and precious, we should enter into heaven, than that we should please ourselves, and cling to such a thing, 'and be cast into hell fire.'

'Little children,' remember your heavenly Father's first commandment : 'Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.' All things that take our hearts from God, are *idols*, or are to us gods which we love before, or more than, Him. These idols are to be found everywhere, and are

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'Little children,' new to life and its snares, you may think there are no idols near you, tempting you away from God. But think, what most occupies your *hearts* and *thoughts*? Idols, although not like those the heathen ignorantly worship, are near you every day. See that they have not made their temples in your hearts. 'For ye are'—or ought to be—'the temples of the living God.' Pray to your heavenly Father, 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;' and listen devoutly and seriously to these words, as if the holy apostle had actually written them to you, as to those whom he knew and loved: 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.'

WINTER FLOWERS.

'When spring unlocks the flowers to paint the laughing soil,
When summer's balmy showers refresh the mower's toil,
When winter binds in frosty chains the fallow and the flood,
In God the earth rejoiceth still, and owns its Maker good.

Shall man, the lord of nature, expectant of the sky—
Shall man alone, unthankful, his little praise deny?
No! let the year forsake its course, the seasons cease to be;
Thee, Master, must we always love, and, Saviour, honour Thee!
—BISHOP HEBER.



WELCOME, dear winter!—cold-handed, warm-hearted winter!—the season of happy home-gatherings, and bright Christmas festivities; the season when the busy toil of the year is over, and nature reposes, as it were, in its Sabbath rest.

Spring comes to us decked in her robe of emerald green, with a coronet of pale delicate buds; and summer dons a flowery garb of varied colours, and wears a wreath of brighter hues; whilst autumn is clad in sober russet

brown, bearing a sheaf of golden wheat, and garland of yellow blossoms. But winter arrays herself in a snowy vestment, and crown of silver frostwork, that glistens like a diadem of brilliant crystals in the feeble December sunlight. The poet has drawn us rather a dismal picture of winter, when he says—

‘ Winter giveth the fields, and the trees so old,
 Their beards of icicles and snow ;
 And the rain it raineth so fast and cold,
 We must cower over the embers low,
 And, snugly housed from the wind and weather,
 Mope like birds that are changing feather.’

But I am not disposed we should ‘ mope like birds ;’ for there is many a bright day in winter to tempt us out for a country walk, and many a bright leaf and berry to be gathered to deck our homes in honour of that Christmas time—

‘ That to the cottage as the crown,
 Brought tidings of salvation down.’

Though the green hills lie shrouded in snow, and the once leafy branches are mostly naked boughs, though

‘ Young spring hath fled with her early flowers,
 And summer sleeps in her shady bowers,
 And autumn hath yielded her golden store,
 And the sheaf lies spread on the garner floor ;
 Though no wild bird’s lay is heard among
 The echoing wood,—all mute in song ;’

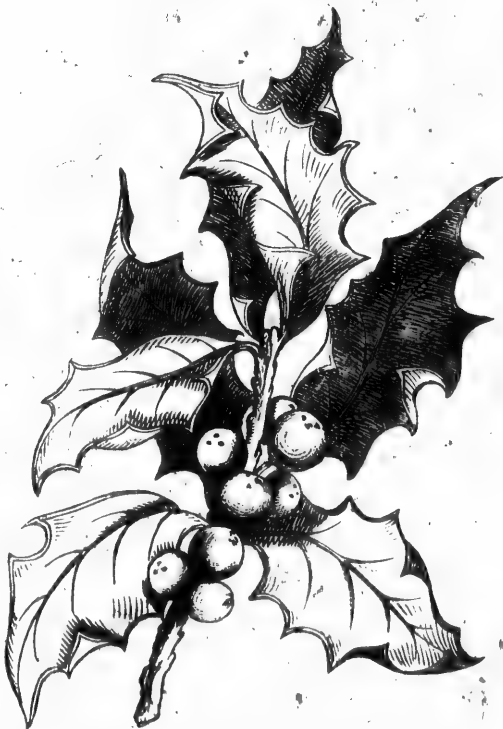
yet there is much beauty in the winter’s ramble, even in the ‘ unsightly, monstrous fungi,’ that, arrayed in their bright shades of orange and red, adorn the twigs of the wild rose bushes, or spring on the moist graves of the withered summer blossoms. The hedges gleam in all the richness of many a trailing stem of crimson-leaved bramble, creeping amongst the bare branches of the thorn, or lost in the luxuriant patches of glossy evergreen leaves of various shrubs, all decked in their berries and fruits of white, scarlet, brown, and black ; and on

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all sides, in every dry, bare twig, we may discover the promise that—

'Nature, in spring's best charms,
Shall rise revived from winter's grave,
Expand the bursting bud again,
And bid the flower rebloom.'



COMMON HOLLY—*Ilex aquifolium*.

But the flowers are not *all* dead ; we may yet discover
a lingering autumn knapweed, or a starry corn marigold,

or an early dandelion; and gather a whole handful of the beautiful Christmas rose, its white blossoms gleaming from amongst the rich green leaves; and in spite of chilling blasts and nipping frosts—

‘There is a flower, a little flower,
With silver crest and golden eye,
That welcomes every changing hour,
And weathers every sky.’—

the little timid daisy, which raises its fair glad face to heaven from many a sheltered nook. Then—

‘Fringing the fence on sandy wold,
With blaze of vegetable gold,
The furze—but, ah, beware the thorn,
Too oft ‘mid brightest blossoms born!—
The furze still yields its fragrant bloom.’

The furze or whin is in fullest bloom during May, when its odour is sweetest, but lingers on through all the autumn months, and brightens many a dreary hill-side at Christmas. Though so common a plant with us, it is esteemed a precious ornament in the foreign greenhouse. It is said that when Linnæus, the great Swedish botanist, first beheld it spreading a robe of gold over one of our hill-sides, he fell on his knees and thanked God for its beauty.

And, in speaking of Linnæus, I am reminded of what my little friends may be interested to hear—that he once proposed the use of a floral clock, which had to be composed of plants that opened and closed their blossoms at particular hours; and the dandelion, which we have just gathered, was selected as one, on account of its petals opening at six in the morning; the lily unfolds at five, the hawkweed at seven, the succory at eight, the celandine at nine, and so on; the closing of the blossoms were to mark the afternoon and evening hours. This they are found to do, the same if placed in a dark room as when in the open daylight and air.

We must not look for many flowers in December, but be content to gather from the evergreens the berries

that gleam in such profusion in the hedgeway, forming an abundant supply of food for the homeless birds.

There are the coral-like haws of the thorn; the rose's crimson heps of varied shades; the transparent red of the honeysuckle, to contrast with the black berries of the sloe, privet, and elder; and the clear white pearls of the mistletoe—that mystic plant held in such veneration by the Druids—a parasite which we are likely to find growing on some apple-tree.

Here we have

'The clustered berries bright
Amid the holly's gay green leaves,'

which are far prettier than its white, wax-like flower that blooms in May. Its sharp, spiny, glossy green leaves are very handsome; and the cultivated kinds are often beautifully variegated, and edged with a golden rim.

The holly wood is hard and very white, and much used by inlayers, turners, etc. Its leafy branches are used with the box-tree and ivy to adorn many churches at Christmas time.

The box-tree is also a hard wood, a yellowish-fawn in colour, very valuable, and sold by weight. It is made into flutes, chess-men, bobbins, combs, etc., and is of great service to the wood-engraver.

The ivy, which mantles many a forest tree, is one of our latest flowering plants; and its chocolate berries are not fully ripe until April, when the birds greedily feed upon them. I have heard that sheep are very fond of ivy, and bees will hover in swarms over its clusters of greenish blossoms,

'Feeding upon their pleasures bounteously.'

Many people believe the ivy to be destructive to the trees round which it clings; but Calder Campbell says—

'Oh, falsely they accuse me
Who say I seek to check
The growing sapling's flourishing;
I better love to deck

The dead or dying branches,
 With all my living leaves.
 'Tis for the old and wither'd tree
 The ivy garland weaves.'

By January the little chickweeds will begin to peep above the ground, and the much-despised dandelion be more numerous. Very bright and beautiful is its golden flower, and deeply notched leaf, from which the name is taken—dandelion, being a corruption of *dent-de-lion*, or lion-toothed. Its root is used as a medicine, and its leaves sold in France for salad. Who does not know its downy seed-ball, that appears after the flower has passed away, and which as children we have blown to ascertain the time of day?

'The dandelion with globe of down,
 The schoolboy's clock in every town,
 Which the truant puffs amain,
 To conjure lost hours back again.'

Then, too, we may look for the bright yellow blossoms of—

'The aconite that decks with gold
 Its merry little face ;'

and that 'little harbinger of spring,' the delicate and beauteous snowdrop, or snow-piercer, as the French call it.

By February many a gay blossom of the yellow colts-foot decks the wayside, its broad, handsome green leaf not appearing until the flower has passed away. Country people infuse the flowers as a remedy for coughs, and convert the cottony down, found on the under surface of the leaves, into tinder; they also use the feather of the seeds for stuffing mattresses, and smoke the leaves instead of tobacco.

By the streamlet's edge the marsh-marigold blossoms, and a very brilliant appearance do its sturdy stems, large leaves, and radiant yellow blossoms make; whilst in the woodlands, peeping above the withered leaves, and half

hidden by its own green foliage, a bunch of beautiful blue or white violets may be gathered. How truly Sir Walter Scott wrote—

'The violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast herself the fairest flower
In glen, or copse, or forest dingle.'

In February, too, the reddish purple blossoms of the red dead nettle appear, and bloom often the whole summer. Its leaves are a dull, purplish green, and its whole appearance is similar to the stinging nettles; but it is termed *dead*, or *blind*, because it possesses no venomous power. Then also we may

'See the little goldfinch pluck
The groundsel's feather'd seeds.'

We must not, however, linger longer over the flowers, but hasten onward with our mass of evergreens, to deck our homes for the bright Christmas so near at hand, when we may chant that beautiful hymn—

'Hark, the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
Christ and sinners reconciled.'

Good-bye, my dear little friends. A happy—a right merry Christmas to you all; and, in the coming year, may you, like the old monk's sun-dial, number none but sunny hours.

L. P.



'BY THE SEASIDE.'

LITTLE ONES ! little ones ! come with me
 Down to the beach, by the sparkling sea.
 Look at the waves, how they curl and roar,
 Making long ripples along the shore !
 Search for the limpet's deserted bells,
 Star-fish, and sea-weed, and tinted shells.
 See how the children are all at play,
 Digging sand-islands along the bay ;
 Building new bridges of old grey stone,
 Bridges that tumble if left alone ;
 Filling small rivers above the brim ;
 Watching the tiniest fish that swim ;
 Hailing the fishermen as they land ;
 Gleaning the treasures that strew the strand !

Ah ! I have got an old Book with me
 Full of sweet stories about the sea,—
 Telling of Jesus, who walked the waves ;
 Jesus the Shepherd, who lost ones saves.
 Listen, and over the ocean's swell,
 Music from heaven shall charm you well.
 Little ones ! Jesus is watching you,—
 Hidden, maybe, for a while from view,—
 Looking with more than a mother's love
 Down on you all from the skies above ;
 Happy if you can look up and say :
 'JESUS, my SAVIOUR,' from day to day.

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'CLOUDS' TEACHINGS.'

VERY brilliant and lovely sunset brought Aunt Katé and her three little girls to the open window one Sunday evening, to gaze in wondering admiration on the clouds that gathered lovingly around the sun, bright with gold and purple and crimson,—such gorgeous tints as are only seen now and again in our northern skies.

'How beautiful! how very beautiful!' they exclaimed; but said no more, half awed by the exceeding glory of the sight. They stood and watched how the sun neared the western horizon, then sank beneath it, and all the glorious colouring faded away, and left nothing but a bank of dark-grey cloud. They turned away with a sigh of regret, and their Aunt shut the window.

As they sat round the table for their usual Sunday evening lesson, their Aunt proposed that they should take the clouds for their lesson-book. 'It is one I dearly love, and from which I have learned much. Shall we have it?'

'That will be delightful,—such a grand book to learn from! But I think you will have to read it for us.'

'I expect I shall be able to teach you to read it for yourselves, and that will be much better. The first thing "the clouds that wrap the setting sun" ever bring to my mind, you will all make out for yourselves, if you think of Him who is the Sun of Righteousness.'

'Oh yes, Auntie, our Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the sun disappeared from us this evening in the midst of the clouds, so, when Jesus went back to heaven, He was received by a cloud out of the sight of His disciples.'

'You have made out that quite rightly. So let the clouds' first word ever be of Him who loved us so well

as to come down from heaven to live and suffer and die for us ; who, when His work of love was all accomplished, went back again, but not to forget His people.'

'Oh no, Auntie ; for He went away that He might send the Holy Spirit into their hearts, and to intercede for them,' added Katie.

'And to make ready a place for them,' said little Edith.

'Has our beautiful lesson-book anything to tell us of that happy time, when His people shall all be ready for that home above, and the home shall be ready for them?'

'It has, indeed ; for then He will come to take them to be with Himself. And when He comes, it will be in the clouds ; and then His people shall be caught up in the clouds to meet "the Lord in the air."'

'Yes, love ; as surely as our bright sun, whose setting we watched to-night, shall rise again to-morrow morning, so surely will our Sun appear again in glory. When, we know not ; soon it may be—very soon ; for eighteen centuries have passed since He gave the promise, and His promise may not, cannot be broken.

'However, if we only could read those two lessons in the clouds, I think we should be wise with the best wisdom ; but I have read many more there. I remember how, many years ago, I was in great perplexity as to where I ought to go, and what I ought to do ; I seemed to be so much wanted both at home, where Aunt Jane was very sick, and here, where your dear mamma sadly needed my help in nursing you all. Do you remember the time when Edie was a baby, and you all had scarlatina ? As I stood at the window considering what I could do, I saw a bright cloud moving steadily across the sky. Can you guess of what it reminded me, and how it helped me?'

'I think I can guess,' said Helen ; 'it was of the pillar of cloud that went before the children of Israel, to show them their way through the wilderness.'

'So it was, dearest, but how did that help me?'

'It must have been that it reminded you that God,

who had guided His people by a cloud, had promised to guide you too.'

'Yes, love ; and I took my difficulty and my perplexity and told it all to Jesus, and asked Him to fulfil His promise, and teach me the way I should go. I felt sure He would, and so He did. That evening's post brought a letter from a dear cousin, saying she had heard of the illness, and would gladly come and take care of Aunt Jane, thus leaving me quite free to come here. When you, too, want help and direction, don't you think the clouds will tell you where to seek them?'

'Yes, indeed, Auntie.'

'Then a dull dark cloud often seems to me like a great and heavy sorrow, it makes everything so gloomy. What is there that can change the dark cloud into brightness and beauty?'

'The sunshine, Auntie. How bright the clouds were this evening so long as the sun was shining on them ! when he went down they grew cold and grey.'

'True, dear ; sometimes the sun shining brightly disperses the cloud altogether, and sometimes it changes it into beauty. So it is with sorrow. Take it to Jesus, our Sun ; and He will either take it away, as He did for us last autumn when dear papa was so very ill ; or, if He sees it to be better for us, He will shine on it and on us, not taking away the sorrow, but taking away all that makes it hard to bear, as He has done for poor Willie, the sick boy in the village. You know how cheerful and happy he is, yet often has a great deal of pain, and can never leave his bed, or play about with other boys ; and he is very much alone, for his mother is busy, and Jenny must go to school. He told me the other day he was happier than he could tell, happier a great deal than before he was ill. "I know Jesus loves me," he said, "and has taken away my sins, and He watches over me ; and I delight in lying quietly down, with nothing to disturb me, thinking of Him, and the beautiful home where He has promised to take me, where I shall never be sick or

sorrowful, and, better still, shall never grieve Him with my sins. Then, every one is so good and kind to me; and I can hear the birds sing, and I can see the hills, and the fields, and the trees, and the beautiful clouds that are always changing." He was in great delight when I told him how those clouds were like his sorrow. "I shall love them more than ever," he said. "But I know something else they are like—our sins; for, as the cloud disappears and cannot be found any more, and the sky is clear again, so God has said, 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.'" Happy child, is he not, in spite of poverty and pain? He reminds me of what I have heard of the ocean: the storm may rage, and the waves toss themselves on its surface, but down below there is a depth where there is ever a perfect calm; so down in Willie's heart there is a joy that earthly trouble may not reach.

"One more lesson, and I think we shall have had read our great lesson-book long enough for one evening. The clouds have no beauty of their own, but they grow bright and beautiful when the sun shines on them. Are they at all like us in that?"

"I think they are, Auntie; for we are so sinful,—“desperately wicked,” God says,—and if we want to get the beauty of holiness, and be like Jesus, we must have our Sun shining on us, we must keep near Him, and not let sin hide Him from us; and looking at Him and loving Him, we shall grow bright in His brightness, and beautiful in His beauty."

"That is indeed, dear child, almost the most precious of the precious lessons we have read to-night; may God the Holy Spirit write it in each of our hearts! Who can repeat the little verse, which teaches us that thus we shall become like Him, our Saviour?"

Katie repeated: "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

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SKETCHES OF SWISS SCENERY.

BY THE REV. J. T. MON, PAISLEY.

FIRST ASCENT OF A SWISS MOUNTAIN—THE RIGHI.

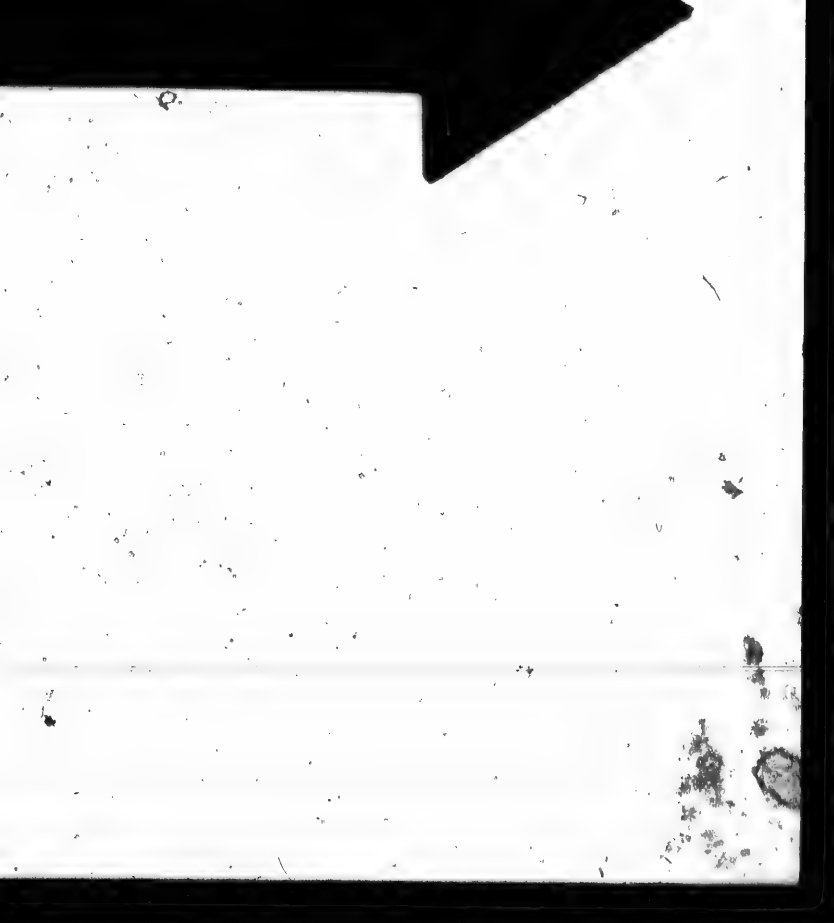


THOUGH the numerous lakes, rivers, and valleys of Switzerland are interesting and beautiful, yet the *mountains* are, of course, the most striking and prominent feature of Swiss scenery. They are the sources of those glaciers, or frozen rivers, which flow down their steep and rocky sides, and also the feeders of their large and limpid lakes, and of the deep and rapid rivers which flow through them.

The principal chains of mountains in Switzerland are the *Bernese Alps*, running almost east and west, near the centre, and toward the south side of the country; and the *Central Alps*, which are the higher of the two, and which form the boundary, to a considerable extent, between Switzerland or France on the north, and Italy on the south. The word *Alp* signifies a *mountain pasture*. Vast herds of cattle and flocks of sheep are fed on all these mountains, up to the snow line, which is 8000 feet above the level of the sea on the north side, and nearly 9000 feet on the south. Each of the cattle has a bell suspended on its neck, to announce its whereabouts; and the effect, produced by the constant jingling of thousands of these bells, was strange yet pleasing. Above the snow line, all is naked rock, or pure white snow; while on the highest summits, nothing but snow ever falls from one century to another, in consequence of the greater rarity and coldness of the atmosphere.

It was on Wednesday, the 23d of August last (1865), that we resolved to make our first attempt to scale one









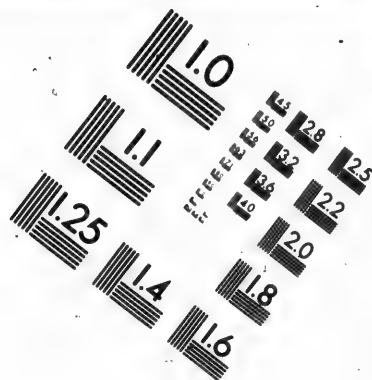
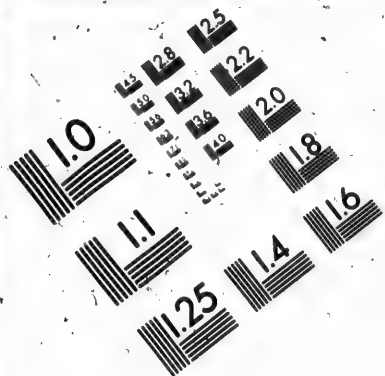
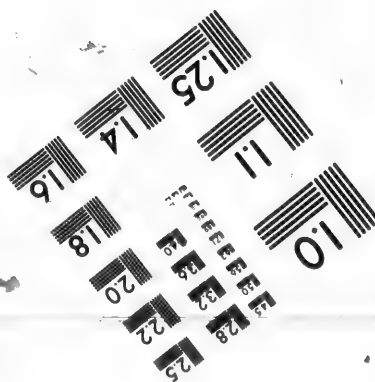
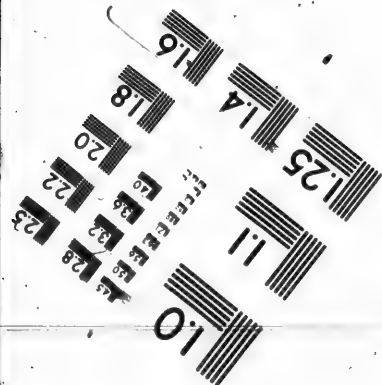
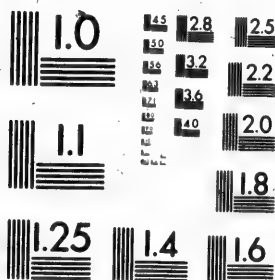


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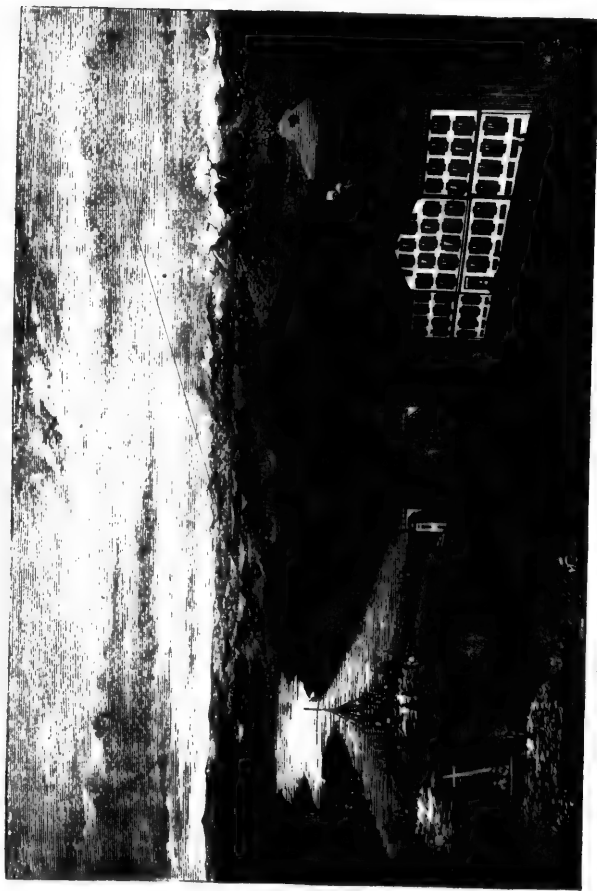
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of the Swiss mountains. We left Zurich in the morning by rail, and sailed along the beautiful lake of Zug, to the small but picturesque village of Arth, which was to be the starting-point for our ascent of the Righi. One of our party resolved to play the pedestrian, another was to be carried up in a chair by four men, and a third, like myself, resolved to take horse, which, however, was more easily procured than in the case of the luckless hero who was compelled to cry out, 'A horse! a horse! a kingdom for a horse!' It was rather a grotesque procession, especially as the horses, raw and bony as they were, though sure-footed, answered well to the description of Don Quixote's celebrated Rosinante.

The height of the Righi above the level of the sea is about 6000 feet, or upwards of a mile; and the time required for the ascent is usually from three to four hours. As we moved upwards, in the afternoon, by the narrow and winding bridle-path, the view of the surrounding scenery widened in extent, and increased in beauty and grandeur. The sun continued to shine brightly, so that we hoped to find him 'glorious at his setting.' But on reaching a hotel about five o'clock, thick mist and heavy clouds passed over the mountain in rapid and close succession; the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled and reverberated, and the rain poured down like a deluge. What were we to do? We were still at least 1500 feet lower than the summit; so that we had nearly resolved to remain there for the night. About six o'clock, however, the sky began to clear, and so on we went. But before we had gone far, the storm rose again with redoubled fury,—the wind blew a hurricane, and the mist was so dense that we could see but a few yards before us. Suddenly, about seven o'clock, on looking upward, we got a glimpse of the spacious hotel on the summit,—far ahead and above us, as if it had been in cloudland. It was a welcome sight to weary and drenched travellers, and no effort was spared to urge on our not less weary quadrupeds; and as we had no change of raiment, we were glad to betake ourselves to our com-

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fortable bed-rooms. So all our hopes, of seeing the sun set, were dashed to the ground. Still, however, we comforted ourselves with the hope of a brilliant sunrise in the morning. But alas for the vanity of human hopes and wishes! We were roused from our slumbers, soon after four o'clock, by the strange but not displeasing sound of the long Alpine horn, ringing through all the corridors of the hotel; but on looking out at the window, all was dense impenetrable mist. No sunrise was seen there that morning, to the no small disappointment of the numerous visitors, who were anxiously looking out for a blink. Doubtless their feelings were similar to those of the unfortunate wight, who thus humorously recorded his disappointment in the album of the hotel—

'Seven weary up-hill leagues we sped,
The *setting* sun to see;
Sullen and grim he went to bed,
Sullen and grim went we.'

Nine sleepless hours of night we passed,
The *rising* sun to see;
Sullen and grim he rose again,
Sullen and grim rose we.'

As the morning advanced, the clouds began to break. Heavy mists continued to roll up rapidly on one side of the hill, and then to sink down on the other side far beneath our feet; and now and then, in looking southward, we had bright glimpses of the Jungfrau and others of the Bernese Alps,—white as snow could make them, and towering up to such a height (13,000 feet) that at first they seemed to be fleecy clouds. The spectacle was grand and magnificent, beyond all previous conception, not to speak of description. Then to the north, the lake of Zug, of which a view is given in the engraving, as seen from the top of the mountain, nearly ten miles long, dwindled into the size of a small pond; houses were no bigger than bee-hives, and their inhabitants were scarcely visible; while on the other side, 4000 feet down, the lake of Lucerne, a beautiful sheet of water,

seemed to be right beneath us, as if we could almost drop a stone into it. There they lay, glancing in the morning sun, and reposing in their loveliness like molten silver ; and for miles around, there were mountains upon mountains, towering in majesty and grandeur, and seeming to touch the very heavens. Still, however, we had not, even yet, 'the body of heaven in its clearness ;' for it was still partially obscured by driving mists and dense clouds. In such circumstances, it required no effort to think of that 'better land,' where no cloud shall ever darken the view, and no sorrow shall ever dim the eye.

'Here often from our eager eyes,
Clouds hide the light divine ;
There we shall know as we are known,
Our sun will always shine.

For when that glorious morn shall break,
Shadows shall flee away ;
Our present darkness shall give place
To ceaseless, perfect day.'

In standing on that lofty height, the thought naturally occurred : 'Would that we were as far above the world *spiritually*, as we then were physically.' What an unspeakable blessing, to be able to look down with indifference upon all earthly things, and to look up to heaven, with holy expectation, as our everlasting home ! May we all realize, in our experience, that sublime description which is given of the church, as 'a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet !' To be clothed with the Sun of Righteousness, and to have this world under our feet—this would indeed be heaven begun !

ANSWERS TO CHRISTMAS ENIGMAS.

1. Dewdrop. 2. Snowdrop. 3. Arm-chair.

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CAPTAIN CHUNCK'S CABIN.

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FOUND AFLOAT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE LITTLE CAPTAIN,' 'MISS MATTY,'
ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER IV.



LITTLE Alf soon found himself quite at home on board the 'Dove;' and though his life there was very different from what it had been ashore, he bore it all with a bright face, for he was determined to be a sailor in spite of every difficulty. At first Captain Chunck, true to the promise given to his old friend, did his best to sicken him. The boy had to do the cabin work—scour dishes, clean lamps, brush boots, and what was worst of all, he had to try his hand at the cooking department. But he did it all cheerfully, and as if he quite enjoyed it, so that the worthy Captain gave up the notion, relieving his conscience by saying, 'that if the lad *would* be a sailor, why, it weren't his fault, and that his duty clearly was to make a thorough practical seaman of him.'

The lad Bilken had been promoted from the performance of these menial duties on Alf's arrival, but poor Bilken was so slow and stupid, and was constantly making mistakes, that the captain had soon to order him back to his old situation, and set Alf in his place. Perhaps, after all, it was the best thing for Bilken: for the mate, a long-backed, slouching, under-browed young fellow, led the poor boy such a life that Alf wondered how he bore it; but the fact of the matter was, he had no friends ashore, they were all dead, and Captain Chunck, having found him on the quay at Cardiff, one sharp winter afternoon, shivering with cold and half-famished, had taken him at once

on board his vessel, where he fed and clothed him ; and rather than leave his kind benefactor, Bilken would have borne twice the hardships.

The Captain of the 'Dove' was a very different personage on board his own schooner from what he was ashore ; and Alf often wished that Frank Dartmor could have seen him, especially in stormy weather ; for on such occasions the worthy Captain behaved so stoutly, almost grandly, at least in the boy's estimation, and was so unlike his usual old self, that he could scarcely be believed to be the same person. In the very worst of the gale, Alf felt safe when he stood close to his godfather, who held the tiller, watching with a keen eye and grim lip how his craft behaved herself ; he seemed almost to see through the mist, while the sharp little vessel persevered in weathering the blast, as if she knew whose hand steered her.

On one of these stormy nights, when the 'Dove' had made several short trips, the man Jack, who belonged to Hurstcliff, and who had taken great pains with Alf, knowing the boy's history, was severely hurt by the lashings of one of the deck casks giving way, in consequence of which it rolled against him. He was so much crushed that he had to be taken on shore, and left in the surgeon's hands, and another man shipped in his place. At this time they were at the Irish port of Waterford, taking in a cargo of beef, butter, pork, and corn, for the Bristol market. There was a great scarcity of sailors, two large vessels having just sailed for Newfoundland, so that Captain Chunch was beginning to fear he would not get a man at all, when one day, Alf having got liberty to go on shore with Bilken, to take a survey of the town, they were accosted by a man who, though his clothes were rather of the 'long shore' order, was unmistakeably a-sailor.

He informed the two boys that he had been waiting for an opportunity to speak to one of them about their Captain ; for, if they corroborated the general

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report of him, he intended to ship himself in Jack's place. He was a big rough fellow, much above the ordinary stature of seamen: his deeply-bronzed face seemed to prove that he had sailed many a long tropical voyage; but there was a haggard look about him, as if he had just recovered from an illness. Though his appearance was not prepossessing, Alf somehow felt for the man, and took trouble to answer his questions. It turned out that one of the chief reasons why he wanted to sail in the 'Dove' was, he had been told that Captain Chunc allowed no drink on board; and Alf stoutly and proudly replied that such was truly the case. It was a well-known fact that, though the Captain could take his pot of porter or jug of ale with a friend when on shore, yet no spirits ever passed his lips when afloat, nor would he allow anything of the sort to be brought on board his craft; if ever he found out that any had been smuggled in, it entailed the instant dismissal of the offender.

'Then this be the craft for me, younker,' said the man, hoarsely, 'leastways till I come across a temperance ship in some other port. Though some might call it a down-come to sail in a canteen, I'll take the berth. I've given my word never to sail where I can get liquor, or with a boozing captain; and whatever it cost me, I'll keep the promise I've made to her, poor lass.'

'Why are you so particular?' said Alf; 'are you afraid you will be forced to drink against your will?'

'No, boy, no,' he answered in the same hoarse tone. 'I'm not afraid o' the forcing, a man like me doesn't need that; but I'm trying to keep from drink. I want to get away where I can't even smell it; for if it comes a-nigh me, drink I must, and it maddens me, till I'm like a fiend, till I'm—' Suddenly he turned round, and hurried off, leaving the two boys staring after him with puzzled faces.

'He be a queer un,' said Bilken, with a half-smothered laugh. 'Guess as how he's got the horrors; hope he

won't be took aboard our "Dove" anyhow; but if he is, Captain Chunck's the man to keep him straight.' And without troubling themselves further about him, they walked on, Bilken taking almost a child's delight in the articles displayed for sale in the shop windows.

On their return, they were surprised to find their acquaintance of the morning already settled on board, a satisfactory arrangement having been come to on both sides; Harrison—that being the name given by the man—was duly entered as part of the 'Dove's' crew, or rather he *was* the crew, being the only man on board besides the mate and Captain. After they sailed, Harrison seemed to have taken a dislike to Alf, for no other reason apparently than just 'because the Captain was so careful about him, and that he slept in the cabin, instead of in the little forepeak. He fancied he must be a skulker or spy from the cabin, and he was therefore to be cautiously dealt with and avoided. But though he took no pains to hide his dislike, he did not treat Alf as he did poor Bilken. If the mate was cruel to the boy, Harrison was brutal, and would think nothing of knocking him to the other side of the deck when he had made the slightest mistake, or neglected even the lowest service required of him. But one day, as Alf was about to mount the rigging, a sudden lurch of the schooner made him miss his hold, when he was thrown into the sea. In a moment Harrison was beside him in the water; he clutched the boy in his strong grasp, and brought him safely on board, with the help of a rope that the mate threw out. When Alf had recovered from the effects of the accident, he came forward to where Harrison was working, and thanked him for saving his life, at the same time saying, with a smile on his face, 'But I don't know if I should have been drowned either, for the sea is all the mother I have, and surely she wouldn't have been so cruel to me.'

Harrison's attention was thus drawn to Alf's history, with which he became acquainted before long, and from

that time there was a marked change in his behaviour towards him. All sailors are superstitious, Harrison being particularly so; and when he discovered that Alf had been the only one saved from a wreck, and in such a marvellous manner, he fancied his life must be a charmed one, and that if he was not treated with kindness and respect, mother ocean would wreak her vengeance upon the offender in some way. After this, nothing pleased Harrison better than to have Alf beside him mending a sail, handling a yard, or repairing rigging; and during the time they were on board the 'Dove' together, Alf learned more from the rough seaman than he would have done elsewhere in twice the time. He became expert at making the different knots and splices, till he knew them all, from a bowlin knot to a 'Turk's head' or a 'Matthew-walker,' almost as well as Harrison did himself. He could also box the compass, he could take the tiller in ordinary weather, he could heave the lead, and he could do any boy's work aloft which a vessel like the schooner required.

It was natural to suppose that, being thrown so much together, Alf would coax many a yarn out of Harrison; but, strange to say, the latter objected to talk about his life at sea. A few dark admissions he made of rough experiences and wild adventure, leading Alf to infer that he had been much on board South Sea whalers, and there was no doubt he had had to do with the slave trade on the dark Guinea coast; and Alf fancied he did not even deny to being implicated with pirates and smugglers, at least he had seen a good deal of blood shed in his day. His early life, however, he would talk of freely; indeed, he never seemed to tire of the subject, but with great delight would recall reminiscences of those days of his boyhood, when he and his sister Nancy

'Gathered wild-flowers in the dell.'

He had left home when a mere boy, scarcely Alf's age, and had been at sea ever since, sailing from one foreign

port to another ; but never, from the time he left it, had he ever paid a visit to his friends, nor would he give a reason for his behaviour. A sudden notion had at last come into his head 'to look up the old folks.' He had been in hospital at Portsmouth, and had time to think of them ; but on his arrival at the little village where he was born, poor Harrison discovered they were all dead, with the exception of his sister Nancy, who had been his favourite playmate when a child. Strange to say, though he had never gone near his home, he always fancied that, when he did return, he should just find it as he had left it, and the change to the contrary, especially the loss of his parents, had been a severe shock to him ; but he seemed to find a relief in having Alf to talk to about them. His voice would soften when he talked of Nancy, of the times when she helped him out of little difficulties at school, or screened him from punishment at home. 'Ay, she was a good little lass,' said Harrison on one occasion. 'Why, I've known her give me more than half her dinner, when mine had been taken from me by the master as a punishment ; and the dear lass would pretend she weren't at all hungry, but I know now it were all out of kindness she said it. Ay, I'll keep my promise to her, if I should have to stick by this here minniken "Dove" o' yourn till all's up. She'll never want again ; for Nancy has had to work hard at that paltry little school, while I've been chucking away money that might have made her more than comfortable.' This resolve was repeated to Alf almost every day, who in his boyish way tried to strengthen him in this wise determination.

Though Alf was quite unconscious of the circumstance, his presence on board the 'Dove' had made a great alteration in both the Captain and the crew. To the astonishment of the mate, he commanded that there should be no swearing in the youth's hearing ; and on the first Sunday after sailing from Hurstcliff, he came on deck with a full-sized prayer-book under his arm, and

requested there should be silence fore and aft, till his godson should read the lesson for the day. Though Bilken was so surprised, and stood with a cooking ladle suspended in his hand, and his mouth and eyes wide open, the Captain had spoken so composedly, that Alf fancied the boy's look of wonder was caused, not by the unusual ceremony, but because he had been asked to conduct the service.

Captain Chunck was always thinking of the responsibility he had entered into connected with his godson; and his moral training, as laid down in the baptismal service and Church catechism, he considered he must be most particular about, especially now that the boy was removed from his grandmother's guardianship. He was constantly referring to these standard authorities to find out what his duties really were.

After the reading of the lesson, he would take the book into his own hand, and wiping his horn spectacles carefully, he would proceed with a solemn face to hear Alf answer his catechism from beginning to end; a rather tedious process for Alf, for the worthy Captain was by no means a good reader, only he considered it as part of his responsibility to see that the boy knew it word for word. On the first Sunday, when they came to the question, 'What is thy duty towards thy neighbour?' at the clause, 'To love, honour, and succour my father and mother,' the Captain paused, with his finger held carefully at the place, and said, 'Boy, what does this passage mean in your present situation?' Alf not being able to give a satisfactory answer, the Captain continued, 'I've been a-studying this here point, and I sees clearly it must mean to you, that you are to love and honour your present parents, Ned Gaskin, and his wife Dolly, till such times as your lawful mother and father turns up; be you satisfied with this here statement?' Alf seeing no reason why he should be otherwise, the lesson proceeded, the Captain between every sentence looking up with a grave face to say, 'See to that, boy; or, 'Ay, hurt nobody by

word or deed,' 'Yes, be true and just in all your dealings, and above all things, 'Keep your tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering.' Then making Alf stand up before him, and uncover his head, as if these actions added more to the solemnity of the lesson, Captain Chunch would repeat from the catechism his part, trying to appear as if the words were his own, but always breaking down, and having to refer to the book again: 'My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve Him, without His special grace; which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer. Let me hear, therefore, if thou canst say the Lord's Prayer.'

At first Alf was surprised that Bilken was not requested to join in the lesson, and ventured to ask the reason, when he was informed that in his case the Captain was not a godfather; but Alf was not satisfied with this, and innocently remarked that Bilken would have to be confirmed some day too, and how could he manage it if he didn't know his catechism? So the Captain having turned the matter over during the week, Bilken was ordered to learn the creed and ten commandments; all of which he did with the assistance of Alf, who found it rather a difficult matter to fix them on the slippery memory of poor Bilken, who, though very proud to be brought in such a friendly way into the immediate presence of his much-loved master, couldn't read at all, and had to learn the lessons like a parrot, in total dependence upon his companion. Many years after, Alf used to look back with pleasure, and trace the influence upon his after life of those quiet Sundays on board the 'Dove.' And the Captain, too, felt all the better for them, recalling the instructions of his youth, and leading him to think of other and higher lessons connected with his future state, when the boy had passed away from his guardianship.

During the week, too, Captain Chunch took it into his head to instruct Alf in the higher branches of his pro-

fession. If the weather was fine, and his presence not particularly required on deck, the two might be seen down in the little cabin; the bulky form of the Captain seated, with a long pipe in his mouth, on an empty box, which he tilted back under him in a most dexterous manner as far as the limited space would allow, so as to enjoy a little more ease of position, and with his legs stuck up against his sleeping-berth; as he gave directions to Alf every now and then, who sat on the stern locker with one or two rude charts of the principal coasts on which the 'Dove' traded, spread out on the top of a barrel before him, earnestly endeavouring to follow the different tracks. This was by no means an easy matter, for the Captain had interspersed remarks of his own, with notes of soundings and local dangers, which perplexed the young learner.

But there were more inmates in the little cabin than the Captain and his godson. There was Dick, the starling, an uncommonly clever bird of its species, who perched himself on the edge of the barrel, and peered down at the charts, chuckling from time to time, as if he knew all about it, and enjoyed Alf's perplexity. Dick could give orders for the steering of the ship as well as his master, which might have been rather dangerous sometimes if his voice had been stronger, since he was very likely to say 'Port your helm!' when it ought to have been 'Starboard!' And he would strut about the deck squalling out 'Steady!' 'Let go!' 'How's her head?' and various other nautical expressions, never forgetting to finish with an express compliment to himself—'Pretty Dick, pretty Dick; I'm Dick, the Captain's boy—hurrah!'

The Captain was passionately fond of animals. He also possessed a hedgehog, that stowed himself away in all sorts of places through the day, and only came out when his master smoked his pipe of an afternoon. Whether the hedgehog liked the smell of the tobacco, or it was because the Captain had more time to attend

to his favourites, cannot be distinctly said ; but 'Urchy' was not long of taking up his position under his master's legs, where the pannikin of soaked biscuit and shreds of fat was deposited at that hour. There was a cat also,—a great, large, white animal, called 'Snow,' that had to be kept under the Captain's own eye, for Snow was of a very jealous disposition, and would have liked to monopolize all the attention. Snow was generally in disgrace, and was banished to the top 'berth' till the Captain's chief favourite, namely, a little mouse, had been fed with some crumbs, placed for her express use in the pocket of his pea-jacket. Though Snow couldn't see it, she was quite aware little Miss Mouse was secreted there, and she peered from time to time over the edge of the bed to watch for it ; but the little mouse was quite safe, for Captain Chunck would rather have had a finger chopped off than allow that little creature to be harmed. Under that bulky and somewhat porpoise-like form, there lay a heart more tender than a child's, in regard to animals. One might have said, indeed, that he felt kinder towards them than he did to the most intimate acquaintance among his fellow-men.

One afternoon the Captain and his godson had gone below to their so-called studies in navigation—the schooner steadily dropping down with the tide to get out of the Bristol Channel on her way to Liverpool—when a circumstance occurred that changed altogether the hitherto quiet life on board the peaceful 'Dove.' On their return to Bristol the Captain was to sail for Hurst-cliff, when Alf was to be delivered over to his grandfather. Though Alf liked the 'Dove,' and his position on board, he was very eager to begin his search for his parents ; and he was constantly asking Harrison about the East Indies, and taking his advice about getting aboard a good ship bound for one of the eastern ports. But during the time they were in Bristol, Harrison was in such low spirits that he would scarcely open his lips to any of them ; and it was quite apparent to all, even

to the Captain, who did not generally notice men's looks, that there was something troubling him. When Alf had tried to enliven him, Harrison's answer had been, 'Never mind me, my lad, it'll mayhap pass off; but I'd no notion the fiend had such a hold o' me. It's a blessing I'm aboard this here craft, and that we've all had to be so busy unloading and taking cargo, else I fear this pledge o' mine would have had a bad chance.' Alf was sharp enough to understand that he meant he was tormented with a craving for drink, and he tried to make him forget it, by drawing him on to talk of Nancy, and of the project the two had in hand, namely, going together to the East Indies.

On this particular afternoon, the Captain and Alf had scarcely gone below, leaving the mate at the tiller, he knowing the coast well, when the latter made signs to Bilken to take his place, cautioning him to be very careful to keep the vessel steady, so as not to bring their master on deck. He then went forward to where Harrison was, who at the moment was looking over the bows, very gloomily indeed, with his hands shading his face. The mate was quite aware of the Captain's rules about having no drink on board, but he had managed to smuggle in a pretty large quantity while in harbour. He had been drinking rather deeply when on shore, and he wanted to indulge himself now with a little more; but he knew it was impossible to make use of his store without Harrison knowing, therefore he thought the best plan would be to let him into the secret. He began cautiously to approach the subject, by talking of the Captain's peculiarity, giving it as his opinion that a man was the better of a glass now and then, especially when in low spirits. Harrison here roughly contradicted him. 'You're wrong,' he said, 'the Skipper's in the right. There be few in our line can stick to moderation.' But the mate laughed, and with a sly wink answered, 'Come now, I don't think you'd be the worse of it yourself; and I'll tell you what, if you don't say a word about it aft, I've got a bottle l—

ay, and mayhap a little more, too, stowed away in a snug corner.'

Poor Harrison drew a long breath, and he twisted the rope he had been coiling in a vehement grasp, as if it had been a serpent fascinating him, but he resisted a little yet against the temptation. 'You're joking, mate,' he said slowly; 'you've been so long with the skipper, that I can't fancy you'd care to displease him.'

The mate only answered with another laugh; and drawing a short black bottle from the inside pocket of his pea-coat, he beckoned to Harrison to follow him down into the little hole of a place that served for a forepeak. The last that Bilken saw of them was, that Harrison lingered for a minute or two, then with a sudden swing let himself down beside his companion. Bilken, as desired, steered very carefully; but, after some time, when the mate did not make his appearance, he became rather anxious and at a loss what to do, as the tide failed them, and the breeze drew more ahead, and began to freshen, so that he had a difficulty in keeping the schooner to her course. Meanwhile the daylight was fading in the little cabin below, and Captain Chunck was thinking about going on deck; but he had first to finish the exercises he was putting Alf through, which on this particular occasion referred to the soundings of the river Tyne. Alf had successfully gone through his lesson, and now made bold on his own account to ask a question or two upon the proper method of taking a lunar observation. Though a first-rate coasting seaman, the Captain would scarcely have been competent to find his latitude correctly on the main ocean, while the discovery of his longitude would have still more perplexed him. After his godson's question, he seemed to have some unwonted obstruction in his tobacco pipe, at which he puffed and picked awkwardly for some minutes. 'Ah—hum—well, a lunar d'ye say? That's a different question altogether, boy! Why, in course, the way you goes to work is this, you—But what's the matter with the tiller there? for the ir-

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regular working of the helm, and the peculiar gurgle of the water as it rushed past the rudder, told his experienced ear something was wrong with the steerage. He hastily sprang to his feet, not altogether sorry of the interruption to this scientific statement. Putting his head up the skylight, he called out to the mate to tell him what was the matter, but was surprised to hear instead the voice of Bilken, saying, 'Oh, master, come on deck, there be such doin's down for'ard as never was. I believe that 'ere Harrison must be a-going stark mad ; and the craft, she yaws so much, I can't make her lay to her course no-how.' Next minute the Captain and Alf were on deck, when the Captain took the tiller, and ordered them to go forward and ascertain what the mate was doing. They were not half-way along the deck when Harrison sprang up out of the fore-*scuttle*, almost as if he had been shot from a cannon's mouth, and strode up to where the Captain stood mute with surprise, steering his vessel with great difficulty.

'Captain Chunck,' said Harrison, whose eyes glared with wild excitement, 'you're a good man, I won't harm you ; but hark ye, your mate gave me drink—let him speak for himself.' Here the figure of the mate appeared, unsteadily reeling from the mingled effects of intoxication and violent usage, that had caused the blood to stream down his face, partly sobering him.

'What is this, Joseph Rogers?' said the Captain sternly ; 'have you nothing to say ?'

The mate sulkily hung his head. 'I don't know if I can,' he said ; 'only when I had no more to give him, he bumped my skull against the hatch, till I thought murder would have been done.' Harrison gave an uncouth laugh, seeming in no way abashed ; nay, his huge form had even assumed a savage grandeur, which showed that at that moment he felt himself the master, and he stamped his foot, as if to prove he was resolved to have his own way.

'What do you want ?' said Captain Chunck with some

dignity, considering he was an elderly man, and had no support whatever to count upon. 'Do you mean anything mutinous, my man? This is nought but a coaster, it's true; howsomdever the laws of the high seas will—'

'You're a good man,' said Harrison again, 'an' I won't harm you; but I *must* have *more*, d'ye see!'

'I haven't got none—leastways the little bottle I keeps for medicine can't be counted,' was the calm reply of the Captain. 'And what's more, Harrison, I wouldn't give it to you, no, not though you took my life, as it's true ye might.'

Before this moral courage, even the fierce eye of the seaman quailed. He looked round irresolutely, then said, 'Well, Captain, we'll part here, you an' I. I won't just force ye to send me right ashore; but there's Lundy Isle here, it's next thing to a desert one,' he added, with the leer of barbarian cunning. 'No grog-shops, Captain, nothing but the light-keepers! Put her on the other tack, drop the boat, and I'll scull myself ashore there, with the lads to bring it back.'

To this demand Captain Chunck necessarily yielded; he could not help himself, so he considered it more becoming to do so without further words. The schooner, therefore, was 'put about,' and the boys were despatched in it towards the lighthouse, which shone broad on the lee-quarter. They had got into the deep shadow of the lighthouse rocks, and were touching the shore of the cove, into which Harrison directed the boat, when he took hold of Alf's hand; and with a sort of husky shake in his voice, he said, 'Boy, I be sorry to part with you like this.'

'Harrison,' said Alf, gently, 'is there no way to save you? Won't you come back with us again, and try once more? Think of Nancy! Oh, how I wish my good granny was here,' he called out in his earnestness to save him; 'she could speak to you, when I can't; but I know she would tell you, that it vexes not only Nancy, but all the angels in heaven will mourn for you.'

'It can't be, youngster; instead o' the desert isle I spoke o' to good old Chunck, here I'm back to port. What you say, boy, is like a rope hove over to a sinking man; and I'd like to lay hold on't, but I can't. I must have more drink, for my throat's on fire, an' it must be slaked. It's not likely we'll ever meet again; but if we do, I'll be glad. If good-will's worth having from the likes o' me, why, you has it, boy! I'd a'most said, God bless you!'

The next moment he was gone; they waited till the last sound of his footsteps had died away up the rocks, then cheerlessly sculled themselves back to the schooner.

(To be continued.)

'A HAPPY NEW YEAR.'

Sing softly, sing slowly, the old year is dying,

The hours are number'd—its end now draws near;

But while its last moments are rapidly flying,

Dear children, we wish you 'A Happy New Year.'

We wish not for honour, for riches, for treasure;

These last but a moment—they soon disappear;

And though ours were silver and gold without measure,

Oh, *these* could not bring us 'A Happy New Year.'

We wish you the smile of our Father in heaven,

The sense of His love without shadow or fear;

He will not withhold, who a Saviour hath given,

And oh! may He send you 'A Happy New Year.'

E. S. E.

A NEW-YEAR'S ADDRESS,

ON SOME GREAT EMPERORS WHO CAME DOWN FROM
THEIR THRONES.

BY THE REV. J. M'MURTRIE, EDINBURGH.



ANY hundreds of years ago there lived a very bad emperor in Rome, whose name was Commodus. He dwelt in a splendid palace, with many servants to wait on him; and he got whatever he wished for, though it had to be brought from the ends of the earth. For he reigned over all the most beautiful countries that were known at that time, and Britain was only a small part of his kingdom, of which he did not think very much.

This man, so highly favoured by God, could have helped to make millions of people happy, if he had been just and good; but he was so selfish, that he cared for nobody's pleasure but his own. He hated all books and learning; and his life was so wicked, that good people do not like to talk about the things which he did every day. He was continually ordering innocent people to be put to death; and men, women, and children trembled when they only heard his name.

At last his punishment came at a very remarkable time. He intended to begin a new course of wickedness on a New-Year's day; but while he was sleeping on the last night of the old year, his own servants conspired against him, and killed him. When the news spread through Rome next morning, people at first said it was too good to be true; and when at length they believed it, there was nothing heard but shouts of joy.

It is very sad to live in such a way, that those who might

have loved you are glad when you are dead. Yet thus it was with Commodus; and everybody in Rome said that was the first happy new year they had seen for many a day.

Some of you are old enough to have read of other emperors who were better men, and who came down from their thrones of their own free will, and at various seasons of the year.

Once on a May-day (the first day of May), a great throne was placed in the middle of a large plain, and the Emperor Diocletian sat on that throne, wearing the purple robe, which it was not lawful for any but an emperor to wear. The whole plain was filled with soldiers and citizens, all waiting in the greatest astonishment, for it was the first time that an emperor had ever been known to retire into private life. He told them he was no longer able for the cares of government, and that he wished to end his days, in quiet. Then he took off the purple robe, and, coming down, entered a carriage, and rapidly drove away. He lived many years afterwards in the country, occupying himself in gardening; and he used to say that he was happier in his garden than when he was emperor of the world.

I shall not say anything about the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who followed the same course, and whose history I hope you will one day read for yourselves.

The writer of these lines was once in an old palace in France, which stands in the forest of Fontainebleau. He was in a room where there is a little table, with an inkstand and a pen. Three-and-fifty years ago, on a day in spring, there was a man in that room, against whom your grandfathers fought, and for whose downfall your grandmothers prayed when they were young. It was the First Napoleon. He sat down at that little table, and dipped the pen in the ink, and wrote his name. When he sat down, he was still the greatest emperor then living; and when he had signed his name, he was a private man and an exile.

And now, having spoken to you of these emperors, of whom some were wicked, and some were warriors, whose ambition destroyed thousands of human lives, I do not like to name in the same breath the holiest of all names. But I may ask you two questions, and you will find out the answers for yourselves.

(1.) Where is the King's palace that is more beautiful than any which was ever adorned with gold, and silver, and precious stones?

(2.) What King lived there, who was greater than any I have told you of, and far more richly attended, and who left His throne, and laid aside all His glory?

This is the time for saying to you, 'A Happy New Year!' May God give you health and pleasure this year, if it be His loving will! If each of you, who read this address, will try to be God's child this year, and ask Him to keep you, then it will be a happy year—whether you are strong and well, or whether you are weak, or even if He should call you to leave dear friends here for a time. No doubt, the holy ones who are around the throne, count that year the happiest new year, in which they entered into the palace of the King.

Those who prepare for you this little magazine—whom sometimes tell you stories, and sometimes speak to you in plain kind words about Jesus—now send you their best wishes. They ask you to remember just now, when you are happy, that Great King who, about this season, came into the world, because He pitied and loved us all. Other kings only leave their thrones when they cannot help themselves, or when they are tired. But He came down to die for us, and then to make us like Himself, and take us up that He may set us also on His throne. May you feel happier when you read this at a pleasant time, for it is the good tidings which God sent to make your hearts glad.



A NEW YEAR'S WISH.

THE good old year has glided by,
Its joys, its woes for ever fled :
The secret story is on high,
And in the book of God 'tis read.

Sweet chimes another year have told ;
To-day are happy wishes given,
And coming hours are precious gold,
To fit you, little ones, for heaven.

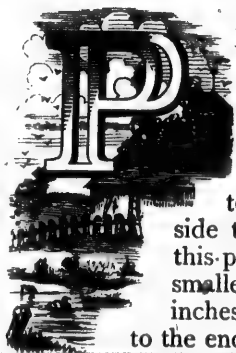
Your hopes are bright as morning sun ;
No wintry clouds have dimmed the sky ;
Each little race has just begun,
Ah ! loving Jesus, be Thou nigh.

Kind Shepherd, guide the little flock,
Ah ! lead them in the narrow way,
Till hid in Thee, the living rock,
They'll soar at length to endless day.

M. C.

STORIES ABOUT BIRDS.

THE WREN.



PRETTY little Jenny Wren! there she comes with her brown coat and her short tail standing erect, edging her way amongst the other birds who come in numbers to pick the crumbs which are scattered in these cold winter days outside the window of the room from which this paper is written. Jenny is one of our smallest British birds, measuring only four inches in length, from the point of her bill to the end of her tail; but she is a brave little creature, and keeps her own against birds of double her size.

I don't know what gave rise to the idea that Jenny Wren was Cock Robin's wife; but wrong as the notion is, I dare say that all my little readers have heard it said, and can repeat the poem, in which Cock Robin is made to ask Jenny to become his wife, promising her cherry pie, currant wine, and all sorts of fine dresses. To which sensible Jenny replies, that

'Though cherry pie is very good,
And so is currant wine,
Yet she will wear her brown gown,
And never go too fine !'

But, in truth, though Jenny and Robin may be very good friends, that is all, for Jenny's husband wears a brown coat like her own, and makes her a very good mate, singing his very best to cheer her, whilst she sits patiently on her eggs. The wren builds a curious, oval-shaped nest, roofed over, with only a small opening for ingress and egress.

When spring days come again, and green leaves are quivering with delight in the bright sunshine, and an unceasing burst of music is rising to heaven from our 'feathered friends,' then is the time to set out to search for Jenny's nest. Look well at the sides of some of the trees, low down on the grassy banks, or in the ever-green bushes, and there you will find what you seek. The opening is so small, that if you wish to find out if there are any eggs in it, you must only put in one finger very gently, then count one, two, three. Oh! you say there are lots of them, and so small you are afraid to touch them. No wonder you are surprised at their number, for there are often as many as fifteen in one nest; and very pretty they are—white, sprinkled with red, and so tiny. And when the little birds come out of the shell, they are so small, one can scarcely believe they will live!

I once knew a little girl, who set out on a fine spring day to visit a wren's nest, in which she and her sisters were much interested. They had watched the building

D.S.



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of it, counted the pretty eggs as they were laid, listened with pleasure to the song of the male bird as he sang to his mate, looked at the wee birdies as they had just broken the shell which had held them captive, and watched the little brown feathers gradually covering their bodies, and now it was thought they would soon be ready for flight; so the little girl thought she must have one peep ere they flew off. The day was a charming one, and ere reaching the laurel bush in which the nest was built, the child amused herself running races with a beautiful little black and white King Charles spaniel. Forgetting that doggie was following her, she crossed the shrubbery, and went towards the nest. On peeping in, there, to be sure, were the little birds, fully fledged and ready for flight. Twit, twit, and out they flew, some amongst the branches of the bush; one, alas! to the ground. The child stooped to pick it up, but ere she could reach it, the pretty little spaniel, Sly, had seized and killed it. The child was greatly distressed, and I am afraid scolded Sly more than was right, for the little spaniel had intended no evil. After watching for some time at a distance, the parent birds were observed to return and begin feeding the little ones, but the child could not make out whether they missed their little dead one; but the next time she went to peep at a bird's nest, she took care that Sly was not her companion.

There is a curious story told of a pair of wrens, which built their nest in a box outside a gentleman's window. Two eggs had been laid in it, when the female bird was destroyed by a cat. The male appeared very cast down, hopped about, and peeped everywhere, evidently looking for his lost mate, at times singing loudly, as if to attract her attention if she were near. At the end of two days he flew off, and returned, bringing another female with him, who at first appeared very shy, and unwilling to enter the box; but at last she did so, and then the little widower began to sing with delight. Presently they both flew off, and on their return they began to carry out the

eggs, feathers, and sticks: the two last they replaced with new ones, and afterwards they succeeded in raising a brood of several young ones.

The pretty golden-crested wren is even smaller than the common ones, and is often seen in England and some parts of Scotland, generally living in woods, or clumps of fir-trees. In the county of Fife those little creatures are to be seen, and their sweet notes often heard. Small as the wren is, it is not too small to be of use; and by the number of insects and caterpillars they destroy, they prove useful helpers to the gardener. Not in vain has God created the least of His creatures; to the very smallest and most insignificant He has assigned a work, and, let us notice, *provided for their comfort*. For our little friends which 'sing among the branches' He provideth food. In the trees which He hath planted they build their nests. Yea, unto all His creatures 'He openeth His hand, and they are filled with good.'

Dear readers, let busy little Jenny Wren teach you a lesson on usefulness. If such a tiny bird can be of use in the world, how much more may you!

'God entrusts to all
Talents few or many;
None so young and small,
That they have not any.
Every little mite,
Every little measure,
Helps to spread the light,
Helps to swell the treasure.'

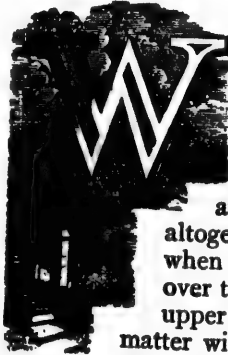
M. H.



LIZZIE WILLIS,
AND WHAT SHE LEARNED FROM THE FAIRY QUEEN OF
DREAMLAND.

BY MONA B. BICKERSTAFFE.

CHAPTER II.



WHEN Lizzie opened her eyes, she found herself lying on the bank by a pond; but it was not the pond in the duke's ground. 'Dear me,' said she, 'I feel very queer. I do believe, when that fairy pulled so at my eyelashes, she pulled them away altogether, and my eyelids too; yet, now when I shut my eyes, something does come over them, but it is a lower instead of an upper lid. And, oh, what can be the matter with my hands? There are my four fingers and thumb all right, but they are sharp and horny; and, I declare, my arms appear to be covered with dark scales. I feel something too on my back, which I do not like at all. I must go down to the pond and try if I can see what it is.'

Down our little friend crept to the edge of the clear shining water, and, looking in, she started back in horror; for no golden hair did she see, and instead of her pretty blue eyes, and fair rosy complexion, she beheld a dark-looking object, with scales on its head instead of hair; black sleepy-looking eyes, only protected by a filmy lower lid; no rosy lips, and, terrible to relate, no teeth of any kind, only two bony ridges, serrated and very hard. 'What an ugly creature I am!' she exclaimed. 'That cruel fairy, to give me such a shape as this! But I wish I could manage to see this hard case on my back;

my chest is hard too,—indeed, I do not believe that I have a bit of soft flesh in my body. There, something has trodden on me. Whatever is it? Oh, it is a great dog; he'll kill me—he'll eat me. What shall I do?

'Draw in your head and legs,' said a voice; 'turn your tail sideways under your shell; then keep quiet, and he cannot hurt you.'

'Yes, I will; but I am so frightened. Did you say to turn in my tail? I did not know that I had such a thing. A tail! I don't like the idea of a tail at all.'

'It is necessary in your present condition,' said the voice. 'And you ought to be very thankful, too, for that protecting shell; for see, you are quite safe now, and when the dog goes away, you can go into the water and take a swim, and then dine off those dandelions close by you.'

'But I cannot swim. I know I shall be drowned if I try; and as for dandelions, they are bitter, and very nasty. But who are you? I should like to know your name, for you seem very kind in giving me such good advice.'

'My name,' said the voice, 'is "Instinct." He who made all things gave me as a guide to every one of His creatures except man; and he is ruled by a relative of mine, though of much higher rank, whose name is "Reason."'

'Oh, I remember,' said Lizzie; 'my mother used often to talk of "the power of Reason," and tell me to be guided by it; but I never much minded what she said.'

'More is the pity,' replied the voice; 'if you had listened to your mother, you would never have been as you are now. "Reason" won't have anything to do with you; so you must submit to be ruled by me. You can swim very well if you try, for your legs are formed to act as paddles, and your tail will balance you in the water; and as for dandelions, just eat some, and you will find that they suit your present tastes exactly. Now I must go, for I see some swallows flitting about as if they were uncertain what to do next; so I must tell them that they had better begin to collect together and go south, for the weather will soon be so cold, it will be necessary

for them to take their departure to warmer climes. You won't like the cold neither; so, as you cannot fly away, you must shut yourself into some hole, or bury yourself in the ground, and go to sleep during the long winter months.'

'Oh, I wish I could be a swallow! Why can't I be a swallow? Then I could fly away to other countries when this place becomes too cold, and so I might have pleasure all the year round. As to being shut up in a hole, I could never endure such a dreary existence.'

'You forget,' said the voice, 'that your desire to be totally idle quite prevented you from being a bird; so, to gratify your foolish wishes, and show you what idleness is, the fairy queen of Dreamland changed you into your present form. In that you must now stay, and you will have to sleep for at least six months in the year. I suppose you are so lazy, you don't like the idea of having to work while making your hole?'

'Indeed, it is not that,' groaned our poor little friend. 'What I meant by wishing to be idle was, that I might only play all the time, and sleep or rest when tired of that. Now, I do not feel as if I could care for play, and I am sure my limbs feel so stiff I could not run if I tried. However, as you say it is safe, I will go into the water; my skin feels so dry and scaly, and this shell on my back is so hot, I can scarcely bear it.' So she swam about in the pond, then crept up the bank, enjoyed some dandelions, and a little while after was travelling slowly along to the lettuce bed, which Instinct told her was in a corner beyond the flower-garden, when she found herself suddenly seized and caught up to what appeared to her to be a great height in the air. Remembering how she must protect herself in time of danger, she very quickly drew in her head and limbs, and kept them safe out of the way, hiding under the little penthouse which she carried on her back. After a bit she ventured to peep out, for she found herself gently handled, while a very sweet voice whispered, 'Poor little thing, pretty little thing; put out your head and show us

your funny little face. Now, open your eyes, you queer little creature.'

She did as she was told, and, looking up, saw that she was in the hands of a kind-looking lady, very tall and richly dressed, with fair hair and a lovely face—just such a one as she had hoped some day to be like.

'What is it, mamma? Oh, I see it is a tortoise, just the same as the one in my picture-book. May I take it in my hand, mamma; it won't bite me, will it?'

'No, dear, it is a very harmless little creature, and has no teeth, though, perhaps, if roused by very cruel treatment, it might give a severe pinch with its horny lips, which it can shut so tightly, that even if its head was cut off, the jaws would still retain their hold. But I fancy the creature seldom uses them for any other purpose than to bite its food; for when danger approaches, it does not seem to stand on the defensive, but prefers drawing in its head and limbs, and keeping them safe out of harm's way. This is very well when it is thoroughly awake; but I have read of a poor tortoise which was attacked by rats when in a half-torpid state, and they ate out its eyes, and otherwise mutilated the helpless animal, whose faculties were not sufficiently alive to enable it to use its instinct for self-preservation.'

'Mamma, is the back and front shell of this creature all in one?'

'It seems so, dear; but there are really two distinct shells, firmly united at the sides, but leaving two openings, one for the head and fore-legs, the other for the tail and hind-legs. Even the upper shell, which appears to be all in one, is composed of thirteen different pieces, laid flat upon the ribs, like the tiles on the roof of a house; and by those ribs it is kept arched and supported, so that it cannot press upon the soft internal parts of the body.'

'Now, poor little tortoise, we must put you down on the grass; or perhaps, if you were travelling on to the kitchen garden, it would be kind to help you on your way.'

'Let me wheel it along in my barrow, mamma.'
'Very well, dear, you may; only go gently, and be careful not to hurt the poor thing.'

Soon our little friend was wheeled along to the lettuce bed; but when his mamma was not looking, Master Harold suddenly turned his passenger out on her back, and then watched attentively to see what she would do in such a predicament. Poor thing, she felt in a sad difficulty, but presently Instinct-whispered, 'Rock yourself, and balance your body like a child in its cradle, and you



will soon turn yourself right again.' She did so; but for some minutes after being turned, she felt quite unable to move, and remained so still, that Harold, who was really a kind little boy, was greatly afraid he had killed her. However, he ventured to give her a little poke, and then she got up and crept away very slowly, sinking her horny toes into the ground, like the nails of an iron-shod wheel, and so helping herself along until she reached some juicy lettuce-plants, upon which she made a very hearty meal.

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So time went on from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, bringing to our little tortoise a dreamy monotonous existence; idle enough, with nothing to do but to eat and sleep; a life that seemed to have scarcely any life in it, and during which our poor little friend felt many regrets. 'How much better,' thought she, 'to be a little girl, to be busy sometimes at work or at lessons; but to feel bright and lively afterwards, and ready to enjoy a pleasant game of play. Now I have no work to do, and yet I never care for play. I feel so continually stupid and sleepy; I seem to be never quite wide awake. Then, as to the delights of being a fine lady; from what I see here, it appears to me that even great ladies are not always happy; for my beautiful mistress, though she wears such rich clothes and jewels, and lives in this splendid place, is often very sad, and I have many a time seen the tears run down her face as she stooped to pet and feed me. There was love and peace in our little cottage, humble though it was; but here I constantly look at angry faces, and hear unkind words, which reminds me of what mother read out of the "good book": "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."'

CHAPTER LAST.

It was on a very dark November morning that the tortoise, awakening from her night sleep, was surprised to find the air unusually cold. Her limbs felt so benumbed, she could scarcely move; and when she tried to get into the pond, she found it covered with a substance like glass, so hard that she could not break it, and so slippery that even her strong pointed toes could not fix themselves in any way firmly into it. 'Come off the pond,' said a voice; 'can't you see that King Frost has been here in the night, and has chained up all the water? If he did not do so, the fishes and delicate water-plants would perish; now they

are sealed up quite comfortably, and protected from the intensely cold clear air above. There is a snow-storm coming very soon ; so I advise you to go at once, scratch a hole in the bank, cover yourself up and go to sleep. I'll come and wake you when it is safe for you to come out.'

'You are very kind, indeed, Mr. Instinct ; but I really cannot do what you advise. I used to be so happy in the winter, sliding on the ice, or making snow-balls. Now, if I go into a hole, I shall never even see the snow, nor the red holly-berries, nor the orange and purple crocuses that come up so prettily in our garden at home.'

'All very well,' said the voice ; 'but I believe that the real reason why you do not want to do what I tell you, is because you are so idle, you do not wish to have the trouble of making yourself a place of shelter. I had hoped that by this time you would have been cured of your insufferable dislike to work.'

'So I am—indeed I am ; I don't want to be idle any more. I find this inactive life so miserable, that I am ready to do any amount of work, if only I may be restored to my former position, and so be free to stay above ground, and enjoy this beautiful world in the winter time, instead of being condemned to bury myself in a hole all in the dark, to be eaten by rats, or something as horrible, when in too stupid a state to defend myself.'

'Well, well,' said friendly Instinct, 'I see you are really coming to your senses again, and in that case you will not require me to attend upon you any more. See, here is my sister, the queen of Dreamland ; and perhaps if you promise her to be an industrious, obliging little girl, instead of being vain and idle, she may restore you again to your proper form, and then you will be once more under the guidance of our noble relative, "Reason," who will advise you not to wander into Dreamland again.'

'Oh ! indeed, I won't. I am sure I will be good. Oh, mother, mother ! Marion, do come here ! And, with a loud cry, little Lizzie opened her eyes to see, not the queen

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of Dreamland, but her mother bending over her, and to feel her mother's loving kisses on her cold wet cheek.

'Marion! Marion!' cried the widow; 'I have found her. My poor darling child, we have been seeking you all night, up and down in the forest, and now, when our lamp had gone out, we should never have discovered the path to this hollow, but for that bright gleam of moonlight that led me here; and then I heard you crying out.'

'Oh, mother,' said Marion, 'how thankful I am that we have found her! But her clothes are wet through with the night dews, and she is perished with cold. Here, wrap her in my cloak, and let me carry her; you cannot, mother dear, you are so worn-out from all you have gone through.'

So Lizzie, like a little stray lamb, was found, and carried home in Marion's loving arms. Her wet clothes were quickly taken off, and she was put, dry and warm, into her own snug little bed. But when the sunlight stole into the room, it found her quite awake, with flushed cheeks and glassy eyes; and, while she tossed from side to side in the fever that kept her in bed for many days, she rambled in her talk about the pond in the 'duke's wood,' and the tortoise, and many other curious things besides; and her good mother, watching by her bedside, shook her head sadly, while, turning to Marion, she whispered, 'Poor dear, see how she suffers for her long sleep on the damp bank by the pond. I should think her queer fancies about the tortoise have come into her head from thinking of that one she saw at Mrs. Bell's; for, when Master Harold told her what an idle life it led, she said she wished she might be a tortoise, or anything else, so that she might sleep when she liked, and play when she liked, and have no more work to do.'

By and by Lizzie was able to get up; and though for a time very weak, she soon became strong again; and though all her beautiful hair had to be cut off, she was not so very sorry to lose it; for, when she looked into the pond below the waterfall, and saw her little round

cropped head, she only laughed and said, 'What a silly girl I was when I had those long curls. I thought I was much too pretty to work. Now I am not going to be so foolish any more, but mean to try and help you, mother, and Marion, as much as I can; you were both so good, nursing me when I was ill.'

'My darling,' said Mrs. Willis, 'you should thank God as well as us; for it was He who watched over you that dark night in the forest; and though He thought fit to punish your wild idleness by making you so very ill, He has brought you through it all. And as for the curls, my child; though nicely kept curls are very pretty to look at, the "good book" tells us, that a girl or woman's best ornament is not in fine clothes, or jewels, or beautiful hair, but "the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price."

RAGGED SCHOOL REMINISCENCES.

THE TWIN BROTHERS.



HAVING promised to give you some account of children we have met with in these schools, I will begin with Teddy and Freddy P., two little twin brothers, boys for whom all who knew them felt not only much sympathy, but almost love.

Although often fatigued in body, I never got tired of Ragged School work; and having my time at my own disposal, I spent much of it in two schools, not very far from where I resided, even during the several years in which Field Lane had the greater portion of it, and held the first place in my affections.

In 1848 I became secretary to a comparatively small

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school, the daily attendance at which was about one hundred, with one hundred and fifty on the books. During the fourteen years I worked there, it was admirably managed by the same kind, benevolent teacher. How many excellent women there are, who give their time, energies, and I may say health, from a desire to save these poor children—for the salary they receive barely supports them! It is something far higher than gain which actuates these devoted Christians.

It was the custom at that school to admit the new scholars on Monday mornings—the teacher taking their names, and where they were to be found; and either myself, or some other lady of the committee, who might call in the course of the forenoon, on getting the address, went to it, and endeavoured to learn if the children were suitable cases for a Ragged School. If we thought the parents could afford to pay for them, we endeavoured to persuade them to send the children instead to the excellent parish school not far off, where, for the payment of a very small weekly sum, the education was very superior to that given at our schools, showing them how much better it was to be independent. If we failed in getting them to promise to send them to a *paid* school, as it is called, then we admitted the children, rather than that they should run about idle. In general, they are very fond of school; and the kind words they hear there, so unlike what they are used to in their miserable homes, the warmth in the winter time, and the pleasure most of them take in their lessons, particularly in singing their hymns and school rhymes, bring them not only regularly, but so early, that you will see them quite half-an-hour before the door opens, sitting round the steps; and great is the disappointment, when the bigger ones are kept at home to mind the baby, or to go on errands for mother, or to carry father's dinner.

One Monday, when I went to inquire if there were any who had applied for admission, I saw two pretty little boys sitting very patiently. They were poorly clad, but

very neat and clean. The governess told me that a most respectable middle-aged woman had brought them, and gave me her address.

I soon found Mrs. P., living in a neat small house, the greater part of which she let as lodgings; and seldom have I seen a more kind and benevolent countenance. She told me, that about four years before, a very respectable young couple came to lodge with her, bringing their twin baby boys of a few weeks old. The father earned a very decent livelihood as a saddler and harness-maker; his wife was a very nice young creature, but very delicate, and soon consumption came on. She gradually became weaker, and when the children were not three years old she died.

The husband for a time was as attentive as he could be to the motherless children, and Mrs. P. and her daughter took every care of them when he was out at work. But at last work fell off; the father lost his employment and went to Wales, where he had friends, to look for work, and to make there another home for his boys.

Mrs. P. undertook the charge of the children until he got a proper place for them—he promising an allowance from his wages when he got work. He soon wrote to say he had found employment, and enclosed half a sovereign in the letter. After that Mrs. P. heard no more. She wrote to his address, and was told he had gone off, no one knew whither.

Under such circumstances, most people would have taken the children to the workhouse, where they would have been taken in, but I will not say *how* they might have been *treated*. Mrs. P., however, could not think of this; but with the consent of her husband and children (for she had a family of her own), she determined to keep them till she found their father. No mother ever fulfilled her duty in a more loving and tender manner. She taught the children to call her '*Mam*,' and they hung about her in a manner not often seen amongst the children and their parents who inhabited those courts and alleys.

You may be sure there was no difficulty in admitting these boys, and for eight years they attended our schools. During that time they acquired a good plain education ; they could read and write well, knew a little of grammar and geography, and simple arithmetic ; but, above all, they had their minds richly stored with gospel truths. They were always at the top of their class, and we used to think the teacher felt proud of her pet boys ; for how could they be other than favourites, when they gave her less trouble than any other of her scholars, and were, indeed, very unlike the rude children she had to deal with ?

Mam kept them exquisitely clean ; and we used to help her with cast-off garments, which she made down for them. She carefully prevented them from associating with the unruly spirits with which they were surrounded ; they always thus retained a look of superiority. Had you not known their history, you would have inquired how it was that such boys came to a Ragged School ?

Teddy was a lively, sprightly fellow, not always prepared with his lessons, whilst Freddy was quiet and thoughtful, and seldom required to be found fault with. They were so much alike, that, had it not been for a look of delicacy about Freddy, you could not have known him from his brother ; they were small for their age, but had good health.

When the boys had been at school for eight years, I went to Scotland for a few weeks. Just before I left I saw them in their usual place ; immediately on my return, I visited the school, and was surprised to see Teddy sitting alone, looking very sad. I was almost afraid to ask him for his brother. The teacher told me that, almost immediately after I left, both the boys took measles, and Freddy never recovered ; the disease was overcome, but his lungs and chest were affected, and he died of rapid consumption. I did not dare to ask Teddy a single question, but went to see Mrs. P., who needed as much consolation as if Freddy had been her own child.

She told me both the boys were very patient when they were ill ; and Teddy was soon running about again. It was a mild attack of measles, but Freddy never recovered strength to be out of bed, but wasted away, and had a very severe cough. Two days before he died, Mrs. P. thought him better, and began to have hopes of his recovery ; she went out for a short time, leaving him asleep, in charge of her husband. Soon after her return, he awoke, and said, ' Mam, I feel better, and am *so happy*, for I have been to the school again, and there were such beautiful children there, all dressed in white, and they were singing—

" I think when I read the sweet story of old."

And oh ! Mam, Jesus stood in the middle.' And thus he went on for some time, telling her of his glorious vision. He then took some nourishment, and afterwards lay quiet. Mrs. P. thought him greatly better ; but when the doctor came, he told her Freddy was very near death.

He had many of these delightful trances. The school was frequently the place where he met with these beautiful children ; nor is this to be wondered at, for I dare say many of his happiest hours had been spent there.

When awake, Freddy was constantly repeating the texts and hymns he had learnt, and used often to ask for the teacher and his brother, that they might pray with and for him, and to tell them of those bright spirits he was soon to join. You may be sure I felt grieved that I had not been with him at that time.

Soon after Freddy's death, from circumstances unnecessary to enter into, the school passed into other management ; the old teacher left, and it was only occasionally that I went to see my old friends amongst the mothers who used to attend my class, and to inquire after the children, in many of whom I felt a deep interest. I never found Teddy absent from school.

About eighteen months ago, I was one morning surprised by a visit from Mam, accompanied by Teddy,

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bringing the startling intelligence that she had just received a letter from the boy's father, to say he was now doing well in the city of B—, had got a comfortable home, and had recently married again, and that he and his wife were most anxious to take Teddy home; and if Mrs. P. would bring him, every expense should be paid.

Mrs. P. could not leave home then, but she made every inquiry, and found all that the father had stated was correct. I ought to have stated that, during the eight years the boys were with her, she had occasional letters of inquiry about the boys, with promises of money, which, however, never came.

Well, Teddy was got ready; we all helped to make him look nice; the money came, and he was sent off by rail. I will not attempt to describe the parting; but Mrs. P. never looked like herself after, and her husband, who died six months ago, fretted continually for these boys, although he had grandchildren of his own. Letters came now and then from Teddy, often expressing a wish to be back. His stepmother was very kind to him, more so, I believe, than his father. He was soon bound apprentice to a saddler, and is now doing well. Ere long, an invitation came for 'Mam' and Mr. P. to visit them, and money was sent to defray their expenses. They went, and found everything very comfortable for people in their station; yet Teddy was most anxious to return to London, and live with 'Mam.'

Since then, 'Mam's' husband is dead, and she is left in very poor circumstances. Let us hope Teddy may live, and one day repay her in some measure for the disinterested kindness she showed him in the day of his need. Let us hope also, that, throughout his life, the instructions he received in his early days may never be forgotten; and that at whatever time it may please his heavenly Father to call him hence, his death-bed may be surrounded by the same glorious visions which made Freddy's one of rejoicing.

G. J.

THE MISTLETOE.



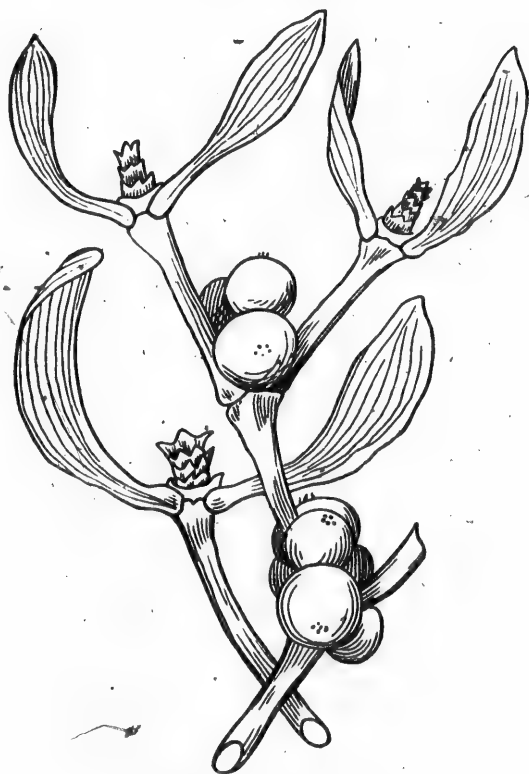
HE most of my little friends will doubtless oft have admired the silvery modest mistletoe—*viscum album*—which cheers the woods and orchards of the south of England, and with its white semi-transparent fruit forms so beautiful a contrast to the scarlet-berried, spiny-leaved holly with which we deck our homes at Christmas time. But few of you may be aware of the interest attached to this plant, which, though of no known use to man, except for the bird-lime made from the berries, is remarkable not only as a parasite, but on account of the Druidical superstitions with which it is connected, and, I dare say, many of you will be glad to hear something about it.

Now a parasite means a plant that, instead of being fixed in the ground and drawing its sustenance from the soil, lives on the juices of other trees, on the branches of which it has gathered, its seeds having been accidentally lodged in the bark.

The thistle tuft is indebted to the summer breeze for the dispersion of its feathery seeds in the air, whilst the stronger blast is sent to scatter abroad the heavier fruit of the ash, etc. ; but it is to the humble and unintentional ministry of a bird that the mistletoe owes its propagation, and thus we have a beautiful instance of the innumerable means which our Father adopts in spreading fertility, life, and beauty upon the earth.

The berries of the mistletoe are the favourite food of many birds, especially the *missel*-thrush, which has derived its name from the fact. After a meal, they fly to the nearest tree, to rub and clean their bills from the

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THE MISTLETOE—*Viscum album*.

viscid or clammy substance that has issued from the fruit on which they have been feasting, and thus the seed is conveyed and clings to the branch, stealing under the bark, and speedily taking root. Any of you could easily try the experiment for yourselves, by imitating the contrivance of nature, and carefully crushing a ripe berry against the bark of an apple tree early in spring.

There are about twenty kinds of trees in England to which the mistletoe will attach itself, but on none more readily than the apple tree, which it often destroys by sucking the sap, and thus robbing it of all nourishment; consequently the mistletoe is looked upon as an enemy in the orchard.

But it was when found on the oak that the Druids—whom I dare say you know were the priests of ancient Britain—held it in such sacred estimation, and associated with such cruel practices and sacrifices, as would make you shudder to hear of.

It was gathered on the New-Year's morning with great pomp and solemnity. The chief Druid cut it with a golden hook, allowing it to fall into a pure white cloth, which was held suspended by the other priests. It was then sold to the people, doubtless at high prices, as a sovereign remedy against disease, and a preservative against all dangers. Even as late as the seventeenth century, it was worn suspended around the neck as a safeguard against witches, and a cure for all sickness—so great were its imaginary virtues.

How thankful may we be, that we live not in the days of such dark ignorance and superstition, that we only value the mistletoe for the lovely variety its pearly berries make in our Christmas decorations, and that its mystic influences extend no further than the sly kiss beneath its branches at

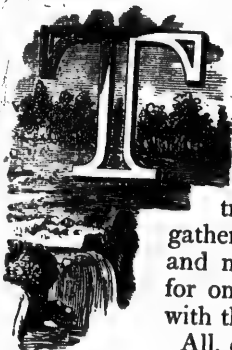
'The merry time of Christmas,
When young hearts slip the tether,
And lips all merry, beneath the berry,
Close laughingly together.'

L. P.



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LITTLE WATCHERS.



THE old year with its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears, its sunshine and shadow, was almost gone,—this was its last evening.

With a heart humble and thankful for the past, full of childlike trust for the future, Aunt Kate gathered her loved children—her nephews and nieces—with their Christmas visitors, for one more talk ere 1866 was numbered with the past.

All, even the very youngest—little Edith—felt it was a solemn time; and very quiet they were as they clustered in the dusk round the blazing schoolroom fire, so quiet that their aunt hesitated to interrupt the silence so suited to the time.

But happy children are not wont to keep long silence. At first, in whispers, a little word now and then was heard, which grew louder and more frequent as all began to talk of the dear old year. Each had something to say in its praise; indeed, it was unanimously allowed to have been the very happiest of their lives.

The boys had won higher prizes at school, and never had holidays been so pleasant. Their sisters had their travels in Switzerland to tell of, with their wonderful sights and delightful adventures, and—what was the crowning joy to the whole household—their dear father had returned in perfect health. Then there was their pleasant Christmas gathering, not spoiled by one quarrel or one unkind and angry word. Truly there was good cause in that house that thanks and praise should ascend from every heart, for God's great goodness during that old year.

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filled with tears. It was Annie Seton. Had she then no joys, no blessings for which to praise God? Not so; but they were such as lay too deep for words; her feelings could only find expression in the tears that rolled silently down her cheeks, as she recalled the way of peace, of life, of holy joy, in which her God had led her since her memorable visit to her cousins that time twelve months. She remembered, too, the sorrow and reproach that had often been her portion. Looking back, she saw that they were each and all but steps in the narrow way—steps steep and rough, that had hurt and wearied her feet, but steps in which she had been guided and strengthened and helped by her Saviour, and which ever led her nearer to her God; and she thanked Him for them all. Miss Morton observed the silence, and saw the tears; knowing their source, she did not notice her further than to put her arm gently round her, and by its tender pressure, to let her know a sympathizing friend was beside her.

The cheerful talk had lasted some time, Aunt Kate taking little part in it, while she rejoiced to listen to the grateful loving words that told of the past, when Helen said—

‘We have been all of us, Auntie, trying this past year to remember how you have taught us to be travellers, and soldiers, and servants, and beggars, and comforters, and givers.’

‘And peace-makers too,’ added Edith. ‘Is there anything else you would like us to be? To-morrow will be New Year’s day, so it would be just the very nicest time for us to begin.’

‘Indeed, dears, there are a great many other things that I want you all to be—one particularly, that has been much on my mind, with reference to the New Year. I want you all to begin to-morrow to be little watchers.’

‘Watchers! Auntie; how are we to be watchers? What are we to watch for?’

‘Perhaps,’ said Katie, ‘Auntie means that we are to watch over something.’

'I mean both those, dears, and something more beside. I want all of you to be henceforth, and for the rest of your lives, watchers for some one, and watchers against something, and watchers over both things and people. We can take them one by one, and so find out our lesson for the New Year. Who then are those for whom we are wont to watch? My boys were lately watching eagerly, were they not?'

'We were indeed watching for one we loved so well,—for our father, who was coming to take us home. We were longing, too, to show him all our prizes.'

'And I think my little girls were watching, standing at the window looking down the avenue, straining eyes and ears to see and hear the first tokens of the coming ones; and I am sure I heard a shout, and more than one, that told the joyful tidings of the arrival. Why was that?'

'Sure, Auntie, we were watching for the boys—our own brothers, that we had not seen for months.'

'And one morning lately, I heard voices at a most unusually early hour, saying, "When will the light come? It must be time to get up?" No one was lazy that morning; no one coaxed to stay a little longer in bed.'

'Because it was Christmas morning, Auntie. Such a delightful happy day, we could not help watching for it!'

'And, dear Auntie, do you remember how we all watched for the doctor, when dear papa was so ill?'

'I do, dears, well remember. And He for whom I want you to watch is dearer far, or ought to be dearer far, than father or brothers, for He is our precious Saviour. He is able to help us more in our need than the kindest and most skilful physician. The meeting, then, of all who love Him will be happier than any that ever took place; it will be a meeting, not for a few pleasant days or weeks, but for ever and ever. It will be a morning brighter than ever dawned on earth, to be followed by no dark night. It will be the coming in glory

of our Lord Jesus Christ ; His coming for His people ; His coming to take them to be with Him in the beautiful home He has gone to make ready for them.'

'Auntie, that's the "blessed hope" you have so often told us of.'

'I wonder, Auntie, why He has not come? Think of all the years that have passed away since He said, "Surely I come quickly."'

'He has told us one gracious reason for the delay, dears. Can any of you repeat the verse?'

Charles, after a moment's thought, did so. 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness ; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'

'Then, Charles, while we long and watch to see Him coming back, we may thank Him for the patience that gives sinners time to repent. He may come before another year has passed away—long, long before. Shall we not all be watchers for Him, keeping the promise of His return often in our thoughts, saying to Him in our hearts, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ;" and that blessed hope will keep us from grieving Him by sin, will keep us from fainting under sorrow, will keep us ready, that when He comes we may go out to meet Him with loving, thankful, joyful hearts?'

As she spoke, some of her little listeners looked up with all the warmth of earnest love and hope ; but more than one hung down his head as if it were a joy in which he had no share. So Miss Morton went on—

'There are some—many I fear—to whom His coming is not a hope, but a fear : those who do not know Him as their own Saviour, who do not love Him because He so loved them as to die for them, who have not come to Him that their sins may be blotted out, their hearts renewed, who are not trying to please Him. But it is not yet too late, though it may be soon. He calls them now to come to Him to be saved, and then when

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He comes again they shall have joy before Him at His appearing.'

There was a pause for a few minutes, when Annie said: 'Besides that kind of watching, you told us, Miss Morton, that we are to be watchers against something. I am sure it must be against doing anything wrong.'

'Well,' said Katie, 'I think that any one who loves and watches for our Lord, will certainly be a watcher against sin; for He hates it, and suffered so much because of it.'

'True, dear; yet we need great watchfulness. Generally when we do wrong, it is because we do not stop to think; and the unkind, or angry, or impatient word, or even the untrue word, is spoken—words that we would often give the world to recall. Jesus said to His disciples—and it was one of the last words He spoke to them—the solemn night of his betrayal, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."'

'Yes, Auntie; and when St. Paul tells us the armour we are to wear as the soldiers of Christ, he adds, praying and watching.'

'Much good armour would be to a soldier,' said Harry, 'if he was found asleep, or not watching!'

'And our foe is so strong, so cunning, and so fierce, he has so many ways of tempting, that we have need ever to watch and to pray. But our talk is lasting too long; they will be expecting us in the drawing-room, so we must just have a very few words as to the third kind of watching—watching over others. Watching for every opportunity of doing them any good, or giving them any pleasure, or keeping them from trouble and from danger. Is this asking too much of my children?'

Some difference of opinion followed this question, and there was considerable discussion. Some thought they were too young to be able to help others; some that it was very pleasant, but very hard to think of doing things at the right time. One or two did not seem to like the prospect at all. The children answered each other's

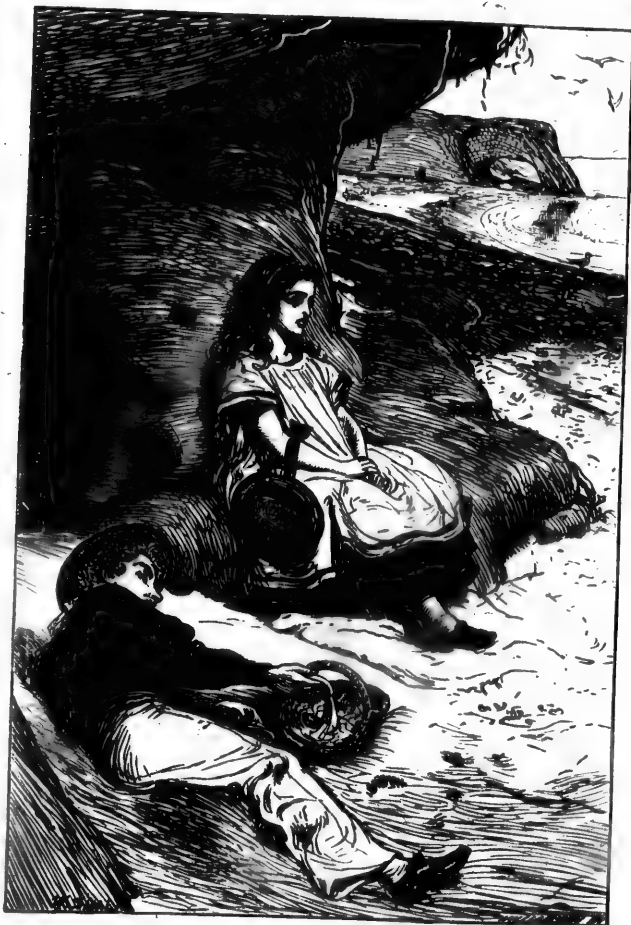
objections so wisely and cleverly, that their aunt only listened for a time. One proved most satisfactorily that there was no one, young or old, rich or poor, that could not help another. 'Sure, kind words even often do good where we have nothing else to give, or even a pleasant smile. I heard mamma say one day that she had a bad headache, that nothing did her so much good as our going about so quietly, and shutting the doors without noise, for it showed her we were thinking of her, and watching to save her poor head.'

'I remember,' said Aunt Kate, 'one day that, when I was very weary, feeling quite worn-out with a long walk in the rain, a little girl came into my room, and looking wistfully as if considering what she could do for me, she left me to return in a few minutes with a cup of tea she had begged nurse to make for "poor Auntie," who liked it so much, when she was tired at least, if not at all other times. The tea was very refreshing, but the watchful love that brought it was ten times more so. I have some idea, therefore, that more than one of my little friends have been watchers without their knowing it. Now I want all of you to be so, and not only sometimes, but always. You cannot think how pleasant you will find this trying to make other people happy; it will keep you from being selfish, and those who are selfish are never happy; but better far than this, it will please Jesus, and make you like Him, of whom it is said emphatically, that "He pleased not Himself." So, beginning to-morrow, I want each young heart here, in a strength not his own, to be little watchers: watchers for the Lord Jesus; watchers against sin; watchers over others—over and for all whom we can in any way help. Then, when watching days are all over, we shall have a joyful meeting, not at the beginning of a happy New Year, but at the beginning of a happy eternity.'

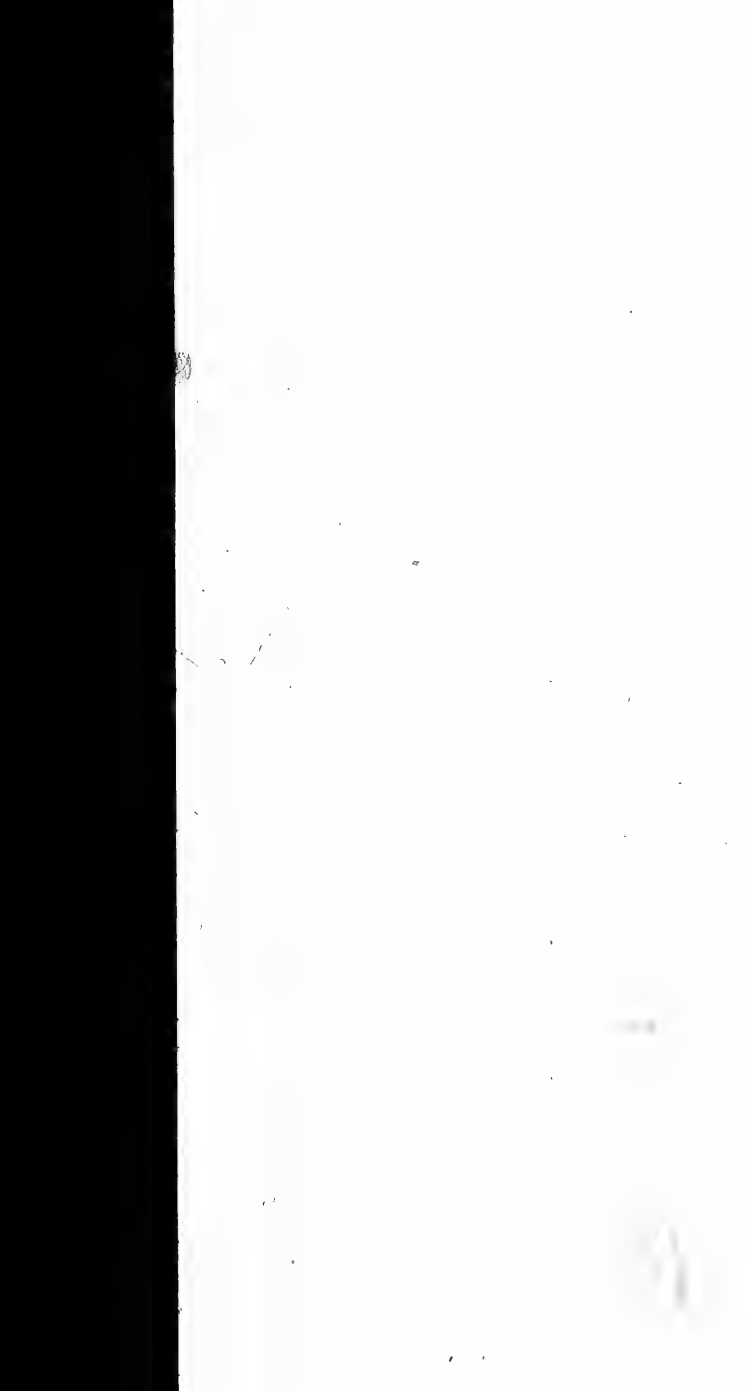
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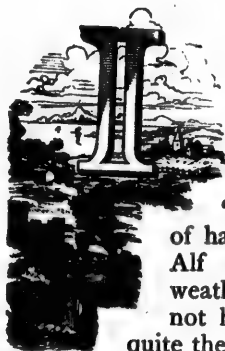
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FOUND AFLOAT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE LITTLE CAPTAIN,' 'MISS MATTY,'
ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER V.



F there was a time when Ned Gaskin's wish, of turning his grandson's thoughts from being a sailor, seemed likely to be realized, it was after Harrison's disappearance from amongst the crew of the 'Dove.' The vessel being then short of hands, there was so much to do, that Alf was almost worn out. Had the weather been favourable, matters might not have been so bad ; but it turned out quite the reverse : indeed, though the 'Dove' had been in stormy weather before, she had never encountered such gales as blew on this occasion during her passage up Channel to Liverpool.

Alf kept thinking of his home, and how they would lament at the tidings of his death ; and over and over again he wished he was sitting safely at the log fire, with the two old faces, that he loved so well, looking down so kindly into his ; and he thought that, if it were possible the schooner could be saved, he would devote himself to make their future life one round of happiness. All his childhood seemed to pass in review before his sight that night, and he knew then how good and kind Ned and Dolly had been ; and when he never expected to see their dear faces again, during that terrible night watch, when they were struggling to weather the dangerous Black Rocks, to get into a place of safety in the river Mersey, he prayed so earnestly that they might be rewarded for their goodness to the poor found-

ling. The storm, coming after the fearful behaviour of Harrison, made a deep impression upon Alf; for he felt thus the more how really dependent they were upon the help and guidance of God.

Captain Chunck, too, was in an unusually serious state of mind; and when the timbers of the little craft were straining and groaning, as if her masts would be torn from the deck, being at the tiller himself at the time, he said in a husky voice to his godson, who, with an anxious face, was holding on by a rope at hand, 'Boy, you might as well be spending the time praying the Lord to have mercy on our souls; for the fact is, if she do work past the "*Elbow*" this night, 'twill be a close shave.' And, while Alf held the firmer by the rope, he repeated, with an earnestness before unknown, the simple prayers appointed for such times of peril at sea, adding, indeed, some fresh and heartfelt supplications of his own, till the altered bearings of the coast lights showed they were out of danger, having cleared the breakers, and, with the help of a young flood-tide, floated into the fair-way of the harbour.

And now once more Alf is at Hurstcliff, standing in the little kitchen, with the admiring looks of the good Dolly fixed upon him. He had been away more than six months, and had not only shot up, but spread out, as boys do at sea; with a roughened hand, and a weather red on his cheek and ear, though the open forehead was perhaps whiter than before, and the brown locks clustered about it more crisply than ever. The first glimpse Ned got of him was enough to show that his hopes and bright projects had failed; but he was so much pleased with the accounts his godfather gave of him, that he was now all eagerness for him to be a sailor. Though Alf had never paid a visit to Hurstcliff since he left it, he had not been kept in ignorance of the welfare of his friends; for at every port they touched at, lying waiting his arrival at the post office, were sundry pink and buff scented envelopes, that were supposed to contain letters from Dolly,

as they had her signature at the end, but were in reality written by Madge Dartmor. Strange compositions they were; for Madge had to write down exactly word for word whatever came into the good people's heads. But through it all, when they paused to consider what was to come next, were little sentences of her own, such as, 'You naughty Alf, you had no business to go away and leave us. I am quite sure I can never like you again;' as if she was afraid he might be vexed, and really her scolding was in earnest, instead of a joke, she would add, at the next opportunity, 'Well, I will like you; but only upon the condition that you come home very soon and never leave it again.'

Of course Alf had to visit all his old haunts once more; but now that Frank had joined his ship, and Ada had gone to a boarding-school, he had no companion but little Madge. Mrs. Dartmor had been persuaded to give her a holiday, Captain Chunck having arranged that Alf was to be taken on board an East Indiaman, then being repaired in dock at Bristol, on his return to that port; and Madge was always thinking of the long voyage before her favourite, and of the time it would take for even her pink letters to arrive. Yet these were very happy days,—days to be thought of during dark stormy weather, and remembered amongst future hardships to come.

On the day before he left, they paid a parting visit to the 'Smuggler's Grotto,' when Alf told Madge the sad story of Harrison, and how sorry he was about him. Madge sat on a stone, while Alf lay on the sand at her feet, idly throwing stones into the pools of water, or tossing handfuls of sand into her basket that stood beside her. But Madge had fallen into a brown study, and sat with her hat dangling from her arm, and her hands crossed on her lap, looking straight out to sea, or watching the waves dashing against a rock not far from the mouth of the cave, unsuspecting that her shells were in danger of being buried in her basket. Alf watched her for some time, then he gave one of her curls a gentle pull, as

he asked her what she was thinking about—what was troubling 'her old little head ;' for Madge, the gayest and happiest of little girls, was occasionally a very thoughtful one too, and would at these times make very sober and wise remarks.

'Alf, I was thinking of that poor man—that Harrison,' she said, with her eyes still fixed upon the sea. 'I am afraid there must be a great many sailors very like him ; and I was wondering why they should be so wild and wicked.'

'Don't you trouble your little head about them,' said Alf. 'Come, give me the basket till I put the shells right again.'

'No, Alf,' said Madge, her young face becoming graver than ever ; 'please let the shells alone ; I must trouble myself about these sailors, or rather, not *trouble* exactly, but think. Do you know, I was wondering if it was because they forgot to say their prayers when they go to sea ! It must be that I think ; for I know when I forget them, everything goes wrong with me all day ; then I am sure to be naughty before night.'

If it had been Frank who was her companion, he might have laughed at her, and Madge knew this ; but Alf understood his little friend, and she was accustomed to speak her whole mind to him ; but now, with his grave feelings on account of his late deliverance from the storm, he did not feel even inclined to smile. Seeing that she expected an answer, he said, 'Yes, I suppose it must be that ; but, perhaps, some of them haven't learned anything good at all. I can't help fancying, when once we have learned what's good, we can't altogether forget it after. Do *you* think so, Madgey ?' he asked, looking straight up at her.

Madge did not answer for a full minute ; she was still in a dreamy way watching the waves dashing against the point towards the open sea. 'I am not sure,' she said slowly ; 'I can't make up my mind about *that*.'

'Well, Madge, perhaps I'm wrong,' said Alf ; 'but, you see, sometimes sailors are ashamed to say their prayers,

for the rest make fun of them, and if they caught you at it, they'd call you a Methody parson immediately.'

'That was just what Frank said, when papa told him not to forget to read his Bible,' said Madge, her lip curling itself up a little scornfully. 'He said he would read it if he found the other fellows did it; but at any rate he would be sure to say his prayers, for he could do that in bed, when no one would know anything about it. Alf Jetsam,' she said, suddenly turning round and looking at him with such a solemn little face, 'will *you* ever be such a coward?'

'I don't know, Madge, I hope not,' said Alf in a low tone; 'but it's not nice to be laughed at.'

'Now, Alf,' said Madge, bending down to him, 'if you are to be a sailor, *must* you become a wicked boy? You are not ashamed to read your Bible at home, and why should you be so at sea? Mamma told Frank that God would not hear prayers from under the blankets, if they were said in that spirit; for if he was ashamed to own God for his heavenly Father, He would disown him as a son. If you are going to be such a coward, I shall despise you; and when you come home again, I shan't see you; and, what's more, I shan't write you any more letters.' By this time Madge had nearly lost her temper; and if Alf had not known her very well, he might almost have been afraid of the little girl, she appeared so fierce. However, he hastened to reply, that he would do anything she wished, rather than have her angry with him.

Though his penitent words brought her voice back to its natural gentle tone, she was not quite satisfied. Shaking her 'little old head,' she said, 'Ah, you ought not to do it to please me, Alf, you know that quite well, but because it is right to do it. But, Alf, will you promise never to grow up into a wicked sailor? will you read your Bible, and say your prayers, even though they *do* laugh? I'd rather bear that than vex the beautiful angels that took care of you when you were a tiny baby, floating helpless on the sea.'

Madge had been told by her mamma that God had sent His angels to watch over the little floating cot during the storm, and bring it safely into Ned's hands; and this she had never forgot, and she always liked to think that those angels were watching him still, and would grieve if he became wicked.

'Dear little Madge,' said Alf, springing up quickly to his feet, 'you are the best and dearest Madgey that ever lived. Look here, if the whole crew should stand and laugh at me, I'll not be stopped, I'll try to be good. Indeed,' he said in a lower tone, 'I'm trying now; and if the angels do know anything about me, they know I'm doing my very best.'

Next day a little crowd gathered on the wharf to see the 'Dove' set sail. Captain Chunck was to take Alf back to Bristol, there to see him safely on board the East Indian; and Madge, with one of her little plump hands held firmly by old Ned, stood and waved her handkerchief till the figures on board the little vessel could no longer be traced, even with the help of a telescope. Over and over again Miss Moore, the governess, urged her to come home; but Madge had promised to wait till the schooner was fairly out of sight. 'Perhaps Alf can see me, Miss Moore, though I can't see him,' said little Madge, with a tremble in her voice. 'He told me he would be up in the rigging with Captain Chunck's long spy-glass, and when he couldn't make me out amongst the crowd, he was to let me know; but how he is to do it, I can't even guess.' At the moment Madge saw a faint gleam of light, followed by a slight puff of smoke; and Ned turned to say, 'That's my boy's good-bye, Miss Madge; he's fired off the Captain's fowling-piece to show you he can't make us out no longer.' But still they stood together—the old bent sailor and the young girl—after the others were all gone, and watched the little 'Dove' till it was a mere speck on the horizon.

Soon the good ship 'Flamborough,' in which Alf

Jetsam was bound for Madras and Canton, set sail. Owing to his experience in the 'Dove,' he was not long of settling into his right place; he became an especial favourite, with most of the crew, and every one in the fore-castle was soon acquainted with his little history. As he had said to Madge, he imagined that in a large ship, amongst so many men, he would hardly dare be seen reading his Bible, or any book whatever; but he discovered that this was not necessarily one of the difficulties he had to contend against. No doubt the Captain was known to be a worthy, and even a religious man; and, as generally follows in such cases, his crew were chosen at least for the appearance of good behaviour. Some of them were grave and thoughtful men in their private hours, and most of them were extremely fond of reading. They would read their Bibles quite openly of a Sunday, or any of the books that missionaries and others had left with them before sailing; and many of the older hands, who were not very good at 'book-learning,' would be glad to sit and hear somebody read aloud to them, Alf being often chosen to perform this office; so that, whatever hardships and difficulties he had to encounter during this his first voyage, praying and reading his Bible had nothing to do with them. The trials he really had to meet were of a different nature. He had to endure without complaint the rough treatment, which in civilised life would have been considered fearfully barbarous; he had to learn to bear hardship and confront danger without the slightest wincing, as fearlessly as the Spartan boys of old; he had to put up with tyranny or abuse from more than one officer, even when he felt himself in the right, or when he saw that the advantages of his own education had made him their superior in knowledge. There were various particulars of this kind, which would have been illustrative of a young sailor's progress; but want of space prevents their being given here.

Before leaving Bristol, Alf had made close inquiry about Harrison. All that he could discover was, that

he had been seen rolling drunk along the streets; but one man was found at last, who had seen him heaving up anchor along with the crew, on board an East India-man—the 'Jason,' bound for Bombay.

After a prosperous voyage out to Madras, the 'Flam-borough' proceeded on her way to Canton, touching at Singapore, where, having dropped anchor about a mile and a half out in the roads, Alf was permitted to go on shore along with some of the crew. As the men were passing along one of the principal streets, rolling about and making as much noise as they possibly could, in their delight at being on land once more, Alf slipped away with one of the boys to have a better view of the town. They turned into another street, to get rid of their noisy company, with the intention of going into the bazaars to make a few purchases of shells and Indian nicknacks; but just as they were at the entrance, Alf's attention was attracted by the form of a particularly stalwart-looking sailor, who stood apparently arrested by the sight of one of the neighbouring opium dens, with its strange interior, and peculiar figures who came and went. Even before the man turned to leave the spot, Alf had recognised his former shipmate, Jack Harrison; and bidding his companion wait for him in the bazaar, he darted across, overtook the burly seaman, and gave him a firm slap on the shoulder. Harrison turned with a stare, which showed he did not know him, for the year's absence had made a most decided change in the boy's appearance; and for a moment he seemed inclined to resent the freedom from so young a hand.

'Why, Harrison,' said Alf, laughing, 'have you forgotten your old messmate of the "Dove," Alf Jetsam?'

Harrison was so taken by surprise, that for a time he could do no more than repeat Alf's name; but at last, being thoroughly convinced it was no hoax, he seized him by the hand, and shook his arm almost out of the socket. 'You may well believe how glad I am to see ye, boy,' he said, striking his horny hand into Alf's,

'when I tell you that I've been in a manner on the look-out for ye, though this is about the last place I'd have expected to find ye. And now, if you hadn't hailed me, I'd never ha' made ye out; and if it weren't for that curly headpiece o' yourn, why, I'd not know ye now, for you be changed, an' no mistake.' And Harrison looked with admiring eyes on the fast growing lad.

'And you're changed, too, Harrison,' said Alf; 'though,' he added laughing, 'I'd have known that old figure-head among a hundred.'

'Ay, boy, I be altered a bit,' said Harrison, sorrowfully. 'I've come in a sort o' a way through a fiery furnace; but we'll not speak o' that just now. I've got something to tell you; and if you won't mind coming with me to my dog-hole of a lodging, I'll spin ye the whole yarn; for harkye, boy, it consarns yere own self.'

Alf at once followed Harrison down into one of the deep narrow lanes of the densely populated native town, where he led the way up a bamboo ladder into a small loft in one of the mud-built houses. When Alf had seated himself on Harrison's sea-chest, the latter, after taking up his position on his rolled-up hammock, looked up at his young companion, with a pleased grin on his hardworn and deeply-seamed face. 'Boy,' he said, 'if it warn't that I've got something more than common to tell ye, I'd ask after the worthy skipper o' the "Dove;" but now I must spin my promised yarn, and cut it as short as I can.'

'Well, Jetsam, you must know I got a berth aboard the "Jason," for the voyage out to Bombay. The vessel was short of hands, else they mightn't have taken me for the single trip; but you see I always remembered them talks we had in that little craft, and I had a notion you'd carry out your plan of coming to them parts. So, thinks I, I may meet the boy in some of them eastern ports, and it 'ud be a pity if we couldn't be shipmates together again if we had a mind. Well, I left the "Jason" at Bombay, when she sailed for Hongkong; and one day,

shortly after she sailed, I was strolling along the streets, trying to *make up* my mind what to *do*,—for, d'ye see, I was determined when I left old England never to look the old lady in the face again, but to knock about from one port to another on this side mother ocean,—when I came athwart a grand turn-out of a carriage that was taking some nabob or other, as I thought, down to the quay for the P'insular and Or'ental steamer.

'I can't tell you how it was, boy, but the moment I clapped eyes on the gentleman and his lady, it struck me I'd seen both their faces somewhere afore; and the odd thing was, the more I looked at their two little youngsters that were with them, the more did the notion get hold o' me that I knew every one o' them by headmark. Accordingly, I followed them down to the wharf, and as I was a-standing, looking at them getting aboard the boats, I noticed one of them steamers' officers, who was left ashore, looking sideways at me; and at last he edges up to me, and gives me to understand, if I was anyhow in need of a berth, they'd have no objections to enter me for the steamer. Of course he said they were in no way short o' hands; but he pretended to put it upon my seamanlike looks, as they had mostly Lascars in their complement at the time. This was the first time in my life I had ever been brought down to be offered to from a steamer, or even so much as to think aught about any o' them smokejacks, whether screw or paddle. Still, d'ye see, my boy, somehow I was struck so curious-like about them said passengers, more especially the lady, that the long and the short of it was, I closed with his offers, and put my mark to the 'greement; then I got my dunnage from the "Home," and went aboard at once.

'Well, the more I saw of the gentleman and the lady, the more I thought I ought to have knowed them; and whenever they came on deck, I got always a-looking after them till the gentleman noticed it; and one day, as I was coiling some ropes aft, he says to me, says he, "You seems to ha' taken a hinterest in me, my man."

"And," says I, "beggin' your honor's parding, but I means no offence, I've been a-fancying I've seen you and your missus—your good lady, sir, before this trip, but I can't make out where, nohow."

"Well," says he, "you may—it's not at all unlikely; but I can't say as how I've ever seen you," says he. "There's something about you one wouldn't easily forget;" and again he looks at me as if he thought I was rather a rough un, so he walks off a bit angry-like, I fancied, and I soon found out who he was. His name was Sir George Mainwearing; and he had been a sodger-officer, and a great man in the Indies, for he had been some kind of a bassomdore among the great Moguls and the bloody Burmans, or somewhere else, when he and his wife were made prisoners all of a sudden. Of course, there was a war made about it with our forces; but it did them more harm than good, for they were all the more hidden up in the jungle, and they never got clear till after the height of the great mutiny among the Indian sepoyas.

'It was Tom White, the stoocard, who told me all this, and he says, the adventures they met with, while making their escape, would fill a whole log-book. When Tom was telling me, says I, "No wonder the poor lady looks so pale and sad-like." "Yes," says he; "but one of the maids tells me, that all through her trials and dangers with them Moguls, she always kept her looks, and was as cheerful as need be." Then he went on to say, that, when she got to Calcutta, or some place where she expected to hear news of her friends in England, there she hears that her little boy, that she'd sent home to her father and mother, before going on that parlous 'venture, had been lost at sea, and she wore black clothes ever after, and even her two youngsters can hardly ever coax a smile out of her; and though she's sent others home all safe since then, she keeps pining for that first boy o' hern most uncommon.

"Well, I can't tell you how it was, boy, but all at once it came into my head,—can this be that 'ere Alf Jetsam's

parents? and the next time little Master Robert comes on deck, I looks close at him, and sure enough I sees a likeness, and then I knew how it all was. It had been your figure-head that had been dancing afore me all the time; and next time I sees the lady, I noticed she was your very picter. And so, to make a long yarn short, I speaks to the gentleman, and tells him all about you, and gave him the name of your old grandad's anchorage ground. The lady is not to know anything about it yet awhile; for if it wasn't to turn out all right, she'd be in a worse taking than before; and I'm bound to say the gentleman wasn't very sure about it himself. And now, my lad, here I am; after searching Bombay for you, I gets aboard a hulk of a country ship, and comes here, on course, never expecting to see you; but I thought it 'ud be a bit of a change; and now that I've come across you, what d'ye say to trip our anchor homewards by the first chance that offers?'

But, to Harrison's astonishment, Alf declared he should do no such thing. The gentleman might be his father, but at the same time he might not; and when *he* had treated the matter so coolly, and had not been sure about it, was it his place to be certain? Privately speaking, Alf's heart throbbled strangely. Had he been alone he would have wept at the thought of that pale sad lady still grieving for the baby she had lost so long ago, even when she supposed he had been drowned; for would not his mother, wherever she was, have mourned his loss in the same way? That this was his mother, Alf, of course, could not say; but hidden away in the inmost recesses of his heart, was a feeling that he hardly liked to acknowledge to himself, that there was a possibility, though it was almost too good to be believed. Still, failing clearer proof, he felt it would be madness to do anything in the matter, and, without listening to Harrison's wild talk of running away if the Captain would not free him from his agreement, he made up his mind to let things take their course.

Harrison had taken a greater interest in the boy than he was aware of himself, and ever since his meeting with the gentleman, he had fallen into building air-castles about Alf's future, in which being the cause of the discovery, he bore a prominent part; so he felt it rather hard to have his grand projects knocked so unceremoniously on the head, and treated by the principal actors with such indifference, if not positive contempt. 'Well, Alf Jetsam,' he said, with a half sulk and a half growl in his voice, 'I thought, after all the talks we had aboard that bit of a "Dove," you'd have caught hold of this here line, as I've come across for ye; leastways, ye'd have took more interest in the yarn.'

'And so I do, Harrison,' said Alf, grasping the hand of his rough friend; 'but don't you see it would never do to break my engagement with the "Flamborough," to go on a sort of a wild-goose chase; and, as for running away, come, old ship, when you think it over, you'd never wish me to be such a skulker. You'd surely not like to make old mother Ocean ashamed of her son, the only mother I can lay claim to at this present time. Besides, it won't be long till we are home; for we are on our way already, you know, if we only go fairly through with the voyage; but the chances are, that we shall take a freight for San Francisco, and so go right round the world home again. But, as we are short-handed, at any rate, there's no doubt that a prime salt like you will get a berth for the asking; so, come along, and let's get it settled straight away.'

Harrison did not give in to the notion all at once. He had made up his mind never to return to England, but the interest he had taken in Alf made him swerve from his purpose; so, after a few more growls, being at last unable to withstand the boy's apparent delight at having him for a messmate once more, he consented, and they went to find Bob Steel, Alf's companion, who was just beginning to think he had been forgotten altogether. The meeting with Harrison, and his story, giving rise as

it did to a flood of strange thoughts, did not make Alf forget the purchases he meant to make for his little friend at the vicarage, Madge Dartmor ; and sundry boxes of shells, a wonderfully carved fan, a gorgeous feather tippet (which, if it had ever been worn, would have turned her into a barbarian princess at once), along with the tiniest pair of slippers, in silver filagree, without heels, were carefully packed up for that young lady, and brought safely on board, where they were hidden away in the depths of a great sea-chest.

Alf's hopes about Harrison were realized ; and when the 'Flamborough' continued her voyage to Canton, the latter was amongst her crew. After safely clearing the Straits of Malacca, the ship encountered exceedingly tempestuous weather in the China Sea, which she had scarcely got the better of, before a serious mishap occurred, in spite of every precaution ; for, during the course of a dark tropical night, the ship grounded on one of the numerous reefs which extend in all directions from the neighbourhood of the Philippine Islands, though she was fortunately not driven so far on the rocks but that, with a high tide and a favourable breeze, the exertions of the crew would suffice to get her off again without much damage. The great danger lay in the defencelessness of her condition, in the meantime, against the attacks of some hovering piratical proas, which began to increase in number, and at last made a determined attempt at capturing the Indiaman. But these incidents would be too numerous to relate here in detail ; nor is there space to tell how Alf Jetsam, and his friend Harrison, along with others, were accidentally made prisoners by these Malay pirates ; nor of their subsequent adventures, till they made their escape to the boats of a British frigate. The frigate was on her way home, and, after destroying the piratical haunts, proceeded on her voyage, without giving consideration to the whereabouts of the 'Flamborough,' or the interest of her owners in the portion of her crew thus unceremoniously carried off. On board the

Amethyst,' some days after their hospitable reception, Alf was surprised to find that one of the midshipmen was his old acquaintance and companion, Frank Dartmor. Perhaps Frank was not so well pleased to see Alf, as the latter was to discover his former playmate; for Frank was a midshipman in full uniform, and in his own estimation a very great personage indeed; while Alf could only rank as a respectable apprentice lad in the merchant service. Alf had borne his trials stoutly, as Harrison would have testified; but he would have endured them all over again, rather than have his old friend look as if he were ashamed to own he knew him.

'Why, Jetsam,' Frank had said, when the boy had naturally appeared delighted to see him, 'you needn't have shown the fellows that we were so *very* intimate. I'm an officer, you know, and you must bear this in mind. When no one sees us, it don't matter—the case is altered then—it's all right, you know; and in the first middle watch we'll have a talk about old times: *then* you may call me Frank, but remember, in *public*, I'm Mr. Dartmor.'

Alf drew up his head proudly; but he walked away without speaking, not knowing that any one had heard the conversation. But the purser, one of the kindest-hearted men on board, had been standing by, in the shadow, and, laying his hand on Frank's shoulder, he said, 'Look ye, youngster, that's a gentleman born; and what's more, I'm told he could put all you young midshipmen, from the oldest to the youngest, to the blush in seamanship. There's no need to be ashamed of *him*, boy.'

But if Alf was vexed at Frank's words, how much more would he have been if he had heard him say, in answer to some questions from his companions, 'Oh, he's the grandson of an old coastguardsman down at our place, at least he goes by that name, but he was "found afloat." I wish he'd come aboard any ship but this; for somehow these sort of fellows have no tact in knowing their proper station.'

Frank had reason to remember his words when it was

too late. He had lost the friendship of his early companion ; and, though Alf forgave him very shortly after, his feelings had been wounded. He forgave Frank for the sake of little Madge at home, because he was her brother ; but never more could they be to each other what they had been before.

(To be continued.)

A CAROL FOR CHILDREN.

‘Awake up, my glory ; awake, psaltery and harp : I myself will awake early.’—Ps. lvii. 8.

CHILDREN awake, for the cock is crowing !
 Clarion notes to declare the dawn !
 Come, for the fresh mountain breeze is blowing
 Over the heather, and through the corn !
 Up, and away for a race and ramble !
 Day is for action, and night for sleep.
 Dewdrops are gleaming on brake and bramble ;
 Shepherds are tending the lambs and sheep.

Prov. xxiv. 30-34 ; John ix. 4 ; Ex. xvi. 13-15.

Oh ! if your friends from the distant City
 Watch you asleep in the glancing light,
 Will they not say, with a burst of pity,
 ‘Are you mistaking the day for night ?
 What ! are you wasting the hours in slumber,
 Many abroad in the sunshine spend ?
 Moments ye never again may number,
 Sent to accomplish a nobler end ?’

Heb. i. 14 ; Ps. v. 3, cxix. 147, 148.

Coins that are golden 'tis sin to squander ;
Hours that are golden ye ought to prize ;
Glad by the hedges and lanes to wander,
Looking around with observant eyes ;
Marking the marvels that fill creation,
Even the sparrows and way-side flowers.
He who is guarding them giveth salvation,
Lights with His love the most desolate hours.

Prov. xviii. 9 ; Luke xiv. 21-23 ; Job xxxvii. 14.

Listen, when Earth in her dream rejoices !
Hark to the choral of sea and shore !
Still in the world are the 'many voices,'—
Voices in Paradise heard of yore.
Pause o'er the myriad grasses waving,—
Never two blades that are formed alike !
Study God's pencillings, lucidly gravings
'Sermons in stones,' to be heard by sight.

Hab. iii. 10 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 10 ; Prov. xx. 12.

What if the spring and the summer gladness
Pass in their turn into autumn sere ?
Joy overclouded a while by sadness,
Smiles giving place to the frequent tear ?
Ever remember the promised growing
Blade, and green blossom, and bending corn ;
Harvest Home follows the time of sowing :
Blessings encircle and crown the morn !

Gen. viii. 22 ; Mark iv. 26-29 ; Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.

THE SNOWDROP.

Already now the snowdrop dares appear,
 The first pale blossom of the unripen'd year;
 As Flora's breath, by some transforming power,
 Had changed an icicle into a flower.'



HE snowdrop is the earliest blossom of the year, and though perhaps a doubtful wild-ling, may yet be found adorning many a green lane in the south of England. It comes with the earliest gleam of February sunshine, when Nature still rests in her winter's sleep, and only the robin is heard piping his little song of gladness. Then will

'The snowdrop, who in habit white and plain,
 Comes on, the herald of fair Flora's train,'

venture to peep from the compact little flower-sheath, in which it has so long lain snugly enveloped, and show its beauteous fair face above the snow, which it rivals in whiteness.

'Lone flower hemmed in with snows,
 And white as they.'

Who does not experience a gush of true pleasure to discover the first snowdrop, or can fail to welcome with gladness the little bunch of white blossoms that steal from out their nest beneath the sheltering tree, bringing to the flowerless earth the cheerful promise of brighter skies and more genial sunshine?—

'Like a star on winter's brow,
 Or a gleam of consolation
 In the midst of sorrow, thou
 Comest, pearl of vegetation.'

How beautiful are its pair of straight-veined, pale-green leaves, its drooping bells, composed of three outer

petals, enclosing their inner triplet delicately edged with green ! How daintily they bend from the tender stalks,

‘Like pendent flakes of vegetating snow,’

braving the chilling frosts, yet timidly gathering in clusters,



SNOWDROPS—*Galanthus*.

nodding and trembling 'neath every sweeping blast !
Exquisite, delicate little blossom, how we love thee !
coming in this wintry season, when so few others visit

us. The botanical name, *Galanthus*, is taken from the Greek, and signifies *milk-flower*. The Germans call it *snow-bell*; the French give it the name of *snow-piecer*, which is even prettier than our own.

The snowdrop is considered the emblem of hope, doubtless because it comes

'The early herald of the infant year ;'

But a pretty legend tells us of its first adoption, which my little friends may be amused to hear.

It is said that Hope, one day standing leaning on her anchor, watching the snow as it fell on the earth, and Spring patiently waiting till the wintry blast had passed away, lamented that those beautiful white flakes were not fair blossoms to gladden the land, rather than chilling snow to leave all so bare and desolate. Upon which Spring extended her fair arms, poured forth her sweetest smile and warmest breath on the falling flakes, which immediately assumed the form of flowers, and dropped on the earth in scattered clusters of beauteous snowdrops. Hope, enchanted with the lovely sight, caught the first trembling blossom as it fell, and at once adopted it as her emblem.

'And thus the snowdrop, like the bow
That spans the cloudy sky,
Comes fraught with hope, for well we know
That brighter days are nigh ;
That circling seasons, in a race
That knows no lagging, lingering pace,
Shall each the other nimbly chase
Till Time's departing final day
Sweep snowdrops and the world away !'

L. P.



‘WHAT MEAN YE BY THESE STONES?’

AN ADDRESS.

BY THE REV. JAMES K. M’LEAN, ANCROFT MOOR.



THIS is a question which, we are told, the children of Israel would ask their fathers: ‘What mean ye by these stones?’ It should, therefore, be of some interest to the readers of the *Children’s Hour*. What does it mean, and to what event in the history of Israel does it refer? If my readers will turn to the Book of Joshua, the fourth chapter, they will find the history of these stones; and a very interesting and instructive history it is.

Just forty years before, the people of Israel were fleeing from Egypt, and Jehovah made a way for them through the Red Sea, so that they passed over in safety; while the Egyptians pursuing after them were drowned in its waters. And now, the Israelites, after wandering in the wilderness for forty years, are about to cross the Jordan, and enter into Canaan. Weakened by their long wanderings in the wilderness, they were utterly helpless in themselves for such a task; and, even if they had been able to accomplish it, the Canaanites were ready and prepared to intercept their progress. It was necessary, therefore,—as necessary as it was at the Red Sea,—that the Lord should divide the waters of the Jordan, and make a way for them that they should pass through it. Joshua was now their leader, and he knew that the Lord would do this for them; for the Lord had appeared to him after the death of Moses, and told him not to be afraid of any difficulties that might appear in their way, but to go forward and lead them into the promised land.

And so it came to pass; for as soon as the priests who bore the ark entered the river, the waters were divided before them, and the priests stood still in the midst of Jordan till all the people had passed over. This was a very wonderful event in the history of the Israelites, which none that saw it, or heard of it, could ever forget; and so the Psalm speaks of it thus: 'The sea saw it and fled; Jordan was driven back. . . . What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?'

To commemorate this event, as well as to make it the occasion of instruction for their children, Joshua, at the command of God, selected twelve men from among the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man, and said unto them, 'Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? then ye shall answer them, that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.'

These stones were carried, and gathered into heaps on the other side of Jordan; and, in addition to these, Joshua 'set up other twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bore the ark of the covenant stood.' And the sacred historian says they are there to this day—that is, they were allowed to remain until the time that he wrote his narrative. How much longer they remained in their places none can tell, probably for many years after they were so placed. And you can easily imagine that, many a time afterwards, the children would ask their fathers the question, What mean ye by these stones?

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of asking questions ; and it is right they should be, else they would never acquire the knowledge it is needful for them to possess. 'Those,' says Matthew Henry, 'that will be wise when they are old, must be inquisitive when they are young.' It was so with the child Jesus, when He was only twelve years of age. You remember that His parents found Him in the temple, after the feast of the Passover, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions ; and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And after this we are told that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Then again, observe the answer which the fathers and mothers in Israel were instructed to give to the question, What mean ye by these stones ? 'Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up from before us, until we were gone over ; that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty ; that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.' In other words, the parents in Israel were to tell their children what a great and wonderful thing the Lord did for them, when He dried up the waters of Jordan, and made a way for them to pass over ; so that the hearts of all that heard it might be seriously impressed by it, and the hearts of their children be inclined to fear God, and serve Him for ever.

This is the kind of instruction which parents should, chiefly, and above everything else, impart to their children. They should lead them to the knowledge of God, and tell them of all that God has done for them, and for their children. 'Serious godliness,' says Matthew Henry, 'is the best learning.' The knowledge of Jesus, and what He has done for us, is the most excellent of the sciences. And in all their instructions, parents should ever have this object in view, that their children should

learn to fear God, and serve Him for ever. 'Come, ye children,' said David, 'hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.'

But the stones set up at Gilgal, on the other side Jordan, were to be a sign and a memorial to Israel of what the Lord had done for them. Is there anything of a similar kind which, in respect of its nature, or design, or appointment, is fitted to be to us a sign and a memorial of what God has done for us? There are many such things. The earth is full of His goodness. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge of Him.

'The summer's heat, the winter's cold,
The seasons all proclaim;
As each their various scenes unfold,
His goodness still the same.'

And, in a Christian land like ours, there are many things, each of which may be regarded as a sign and a memorial of what God has done for us. The Sabbath of old was a sign of peace between God and Israel, and a memorial of the great work which He had done in the creation of the world, from which He rested on the seventh day. And the Christian Sabbath is a sign and a memorial to us of the still greater work, which Christ has done for us. His death upon the cross, and by His resurrection from the dead.

'The great redemption is complete,
And Satan's power o'erthrown.'

Our churches with the gospel preached in them, and our schools with the Bible read and taught in them, are signs and memorials of the great deliverance which God wrought for us three hundred years ago, in delivering our land from the darkness of Popery, and of the privileges

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we enjoy above heathen lands. And if our children only understood these things aright, there is not one of them but would join gratefully in the sentiment of Watts' hymn—

'Lord, I ascribe it to Thy grace,
And not to chance, as others do,
That I was born of Christian race,
And not a heathen or a Jew.'

And if you enter our churches, and join in their services, you will find in them signs and memorials of the Lord's goodness. In the Sacrament of Baptism you have a sign of the sinfulness that cleaves to our nature, and of the cleansing which God has provided for us in the blood of Christ. And in the Sacrament of the Supper you have a sign, and a memorial too, of the utter helplessness of the sinner to make atonement for his sin to God, and the fulness of the provision which God has made in Christ for all who trust in Him. May every reader of the *Children's Hour* know what it is to be washed in the blood of Jesus, and to eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, that they may have eternal life!

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SKETCHES OF SWISS SCENERY.

BY THE REV. J. THOMSON, PAISLEY.

NEAR VIEW OF THE BERNESE ALPS—THE MÜRREN.



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AFTER descending from the Righi, and enjoying a delightful sail to the eastern end of the Lake of Lucerne, we returned in the evening to the town of that name. Next morning (Friday, 24th August), about five o'clock, we were roused from our slumbers by the intolerable din of the church bells, sounding again and again, as if they

were rung by unquiet spirits, who were unable to rest quietly in their beds, and who were therefore resolved that nobody else should rest. There were many evidences, besides this, of our being now in a Popish town. Its narrow streets and dilapidated houses, its dirt and wretchedness, contrasted strikingly with the beauty of nature on the land and on the lake. In admiring Thorwaldsen's celebrated sculpture—a gigantic figure of a lion cut out of the solid rock,—a friend called our attention to a garden close at hand, but overgrown with weeds, like the garden of the sluggard. There was a ticket above the gate, bearing the inscription, 'Le Jardin du Lion,'—the garden of the lion. But it might with more propriety have been called the 'garden of the dandelions!'

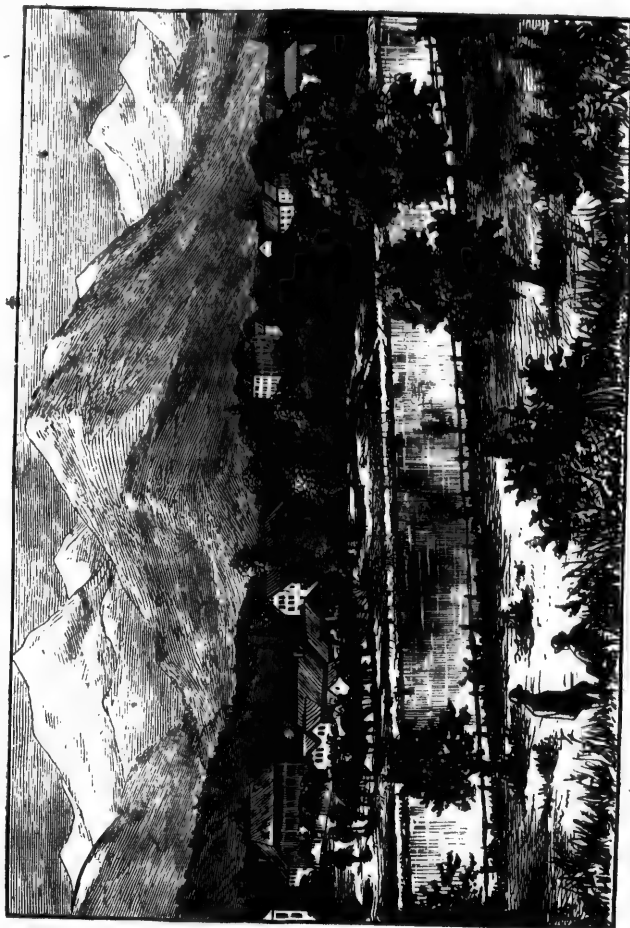
Having reached Interlaken on Saturday evening, and enjoyed a quiet Sabbath there, and listened to two able and earnest discourses by the Rev. Mr. Forbes, of Paris, we prepared on Monday morning to take a nearer view of the Bernese Alps. From the windows of our hotel, we had a splendid view of the *Jung frau* (young woman, or virgin), of its accompanying *Silberhorn*, and many other lofty peaks, all clad in their magnificent mantles of pure snow, and adorned with glittering glaciers flowing down their sides, like long strings of mother-of-pearl.—(See Illustration.)

After a rapid drive of about six or seven miles, along the banks of the White Lütschine, we reached the village of Lauterbrünnen. Our path lay along a narrow gorge, amid rocks and hills, many of which are from 1000 to 1500 feet high. The inhabitants of the village never see the sun in winter, except for a short time daily about twelve o'clock, in consequence of the height and steepness of the intervening hills. After a walk of about a mile, we reached the well-known *Staubbach*, a cascade which falls sheer down a precipitous rock, about 1000 feet in height. As the volume of water is not very great, it is soon turned into spray, forming beautiful rainbows

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BERNESE ALPS—JUNGFRAU, ETC.—FROM INTERLAKEN.

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in the glancing rays of the sun, and wafted to and fro by the wind, on the face of the rock, like a scarf of gossamer threads, or a transparent veil of the finest lace. So it is described by Goëthe—

'Streams from the high, steep, rocky wall,
The purest fount, in clouds of spray,
Like silver dust.
It veils the rock in rainbow hues;
And, dancing down with music soft,
Is lost in air.'

And so, too, Byron describes it—

'It flings its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The giant steed to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse.'

But it was time now to commence our ascent of the *Mürren*, which we did much in the same style as before. It was a stiff pull of nearly three hours; but at every upward step, we had splendid views of the Bernese Alps on our left; and it seemed as if they were always becoming higher and vaster, the more we ascended. We were separated from them merely by the deep and narrow ravine, in which the village is situated. On ascending about 2000 feet or more, and looking down from that giddy height, the village seemed to be almost beneath our feet; so that a stone might have been dropped upon one of the houses, without almost touching the side of the precipice. But what chiefly arrested attention was the magnificent mass of mountains to the south, with their vast robes of perpetual snow, which were as smooth and white as plaster of Paris, or the covering of a brides-cake. And then they seemed so very near, that we felt as if we could almost strike their sides with a stone. On the top of the *Mürren* our height was nearly 6000 feet; but there were the *Jungfrau* and her companions, close at hand, and towering up to the heavens at least 7000

feet farther above us. Now and then we heard the sound of falling avalanches, like thunder, rousing the echoes of the mountains. It was a strange and solemn sight, indescribably grand and glorious, especially as the sky was cloudless, and the sun shone in his strength. It seemed strange, that in such close proximity to these vast heaps of snow, we ourselves were oppressed with the heat, and gladdened with the smiling verdure and the rich crops of golden grain around us.

In gazing upon these vast masses of rock—'Alps towering upon Alps,'—what a vivid picture was presented of strength and stability! When we 'look upon the earth,' how strong and stable does it *seem* to be! Men come and go upon its surface; and the works of men, that may have withstood the blasts of centuries, are at length swept away with the besom of destruction; but 'the earth remaineth,'—its foundations seemingly as strong, its soil as fertile and inexhaustible, its mountains as lofty, and its rivers as full of water, as when God at first brought it out of chaos.

And yet all this is but the *appearance of things*. For what is the reality? It is this: that the earth is being continually worn down by the two powerful agents of *frost* and *fire*. Even 'the everlasting hills are being scattered, and the perpetual hills are bowed down.' At the foot of all the Swiss mountains, and on all their glaciers, you see immense blocks of granite, thousands of tons in weight, scattered in vast profusion, and many of them rolled and ground to powder by the moving ice. Hence, the streams that issue from these glaciers are thick and muddy, because filled with the sand of pounded rocks, which have been swept down from the very summits of the mountains. Thus the rivers are continually hurrying away to the ocean 'the dust of continents to be;' so that the words of the poet express no poetic fancy, but a literal truth—

'They melt like mists, the solid lands,
Like clouds, they change themselves and go.'

On this subject, even Darwin says: 'The wonder is, listening through the night to the never-ceasing rattle of descending stones on the Andes of America, that the mountains stand so long under this incessant and irresistible power.' And an ancient naturalist said long ago: 'That there is such a constant waste, that but for some compensating process [now called upheaval], the whole surface of the earth must, in the long run, be worn away, and sink beneath the waves of the sea.'

'Look, then, upon the earth beneath,' on which you tread so firmly, and which seems as if it would last for ever. Ah! how true is it, that this firm earth '*is waxing old like a garment*,' and that, by and by, it will be threadbare, and entirely worn out, and cast aside as useless! 'The earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.' *And where, then, shall we be?* where shall we find a fitting habitation for eternity? Let us not imagine that, because all things have continued as they were from the creation, they will continue so for ever. In reality they have *not* continued as they were at first; for did not the Flood sweep away the ungodly? and does not geology show that this globe has undergone successive destructions, and successive re-creations? Therefore, when the last destruction comes, may we all be found in the *only sure Refuge*,—in Him who is God's eternal Son, and man's elder Brother; that MAN, who is the only hiding-place from the storm, and the only covert from the tempest of coming wrath and vengeance. 'Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: BUT MY SALVATION SHALL BE FOR EVER, AND MY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL NOT BE ABOLISHED' (Isa. li. 6).

STORIES ABOUT BIRDS.

THE TOMTIT.



THE pretty little bird I am going to tell you about, the neatly shaped blue-headed tomtit, is a great favourite with many of my young friends.

How nimbly it flits from spray to spray, seeming to find it impossible to be still ; now seen on one tree, now on another, in all sorts of strange attitudes ; sometimes suspending itself from the branches, then again busy extracting the kernel of some favourite seed which it holds firmly in its foot !

Those little tits also devour many insects, and in winter do not despise the crumbs scattered outside.

The snow was falling very fast one February day, some years ago, when a little bright-eyed boy of four years old stood at the window of a country house watching the feathery flakes as they slowly but surely covered up the ground, and rested on the leafless branches of the trees; watching also a number of birds which were flocking eagerly to pick up the crumbs which he had scattered outside the window for their benefit. Blackbirds, thrushes, linnets, chaffinches, robins, all came in numbers; but the bird which the little boy liked best to see, was the tomtit; and, 'Oh! here comes blue-head,' was heard again and again uttered with shouts of delight. Days passed; the snow still lay thick, and a sharp frost set in, when one morning, the windows of the schoolroom being left open, a blue-headed tomtit flew in, and was found comfortably perched on a flower-pot in a corner of the room. As a punishment for his curiosity, I suppose, he was caught and put into a cage, to the great joy of little Charlie, who thought he would never weary of watching his little favourite.

For some time it flew about the cage very impatiently, striking against the wires until it was feared it would harm itself. By degrees it quieted a little, and the occupants of the room ceased to watch it, and busied themselves with their books and works.

Now I must tell you that one side of the room was filled with a wooden stage, on which was placed a great number of flowers in pots. The bird having become very quiet, a glance was directed towards the cage, and, lo and behold, the tomtit was no longer there! Not he; that little confined cage did not suit his idea of comfort at all; so, finding there was no egress by the door, he determined to find his way out as best he could; and so small was he, there proved no difficulty in quietly slipping through the wires, and flitting across the room to the flower stage, where, perched on the top branch of



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a large fuschia plant, he looked around him complacently, evidently thinking he had performed a wonderful exploit. Little Charlie was delighted at 'blue-head's' cleverness, and it was agreed he should be allowed the freedom of the room, though it was feared he might be attracted too near the fireplace, and thus meet an untimely end. But this proved a mistake; 'blue-head' never went near the fire, but spent his time very happily, hopping about amongst the flowers, always returning to the cage at night, and sitting out and in it all day for food, which consisted chiefly of hemp-seed, crumbs, and meal. Birdie was never observed eating anything in the cage, but carried the seed always off to one of the flower-pots, where it opened it by a sharp tap, tap; then off for another supply; back and back, till one would have thought it would be tired. It became quite tame, never disturbed by any noise, and appearing accustomed to its new mode of life, making no effort to escape. Blue-head was a great source of interest, and became a favourite with older people than Charlie; so, great was the distress when one morning (after having been an inmate of the schoolroom for nearly three weeks) it was found moping, its pretty feathers all ruffled up, and its bright black eyes dimmed. Everything was done that could be thought of to make it better; but still it drooped and drooped, never entering the cage, and refusing food, still sitting amongst the flowers, till shortly before its death it hopped down on the floor behind the stage, apparently obeying an instinct to die in the dark, and there the next day 'blue-head' was found dead. Little Charlie was very sorry, and with his own spade dug a grave for his little pet, and buried it under a laurel-bush.

The tomtit builds its nest in holes in the wall, or in some decayed tree, and there, like the wren, she lays a number of eggs.

Two children, playing beside a merry chattering brook, were startled by seeing a pair of piercing black eyes watching them from out of a hole in the trunk of

an old willow-tree which overhung the brook. Leaving their play, they crept slowly up to the place, when out flew a little blue tit, and, on further exploring, its nest was found. The children left the pretty eggs unmolested, and were repaid by soon seeing birdie return, hop back into the hole, and once more nestle down on the eggs. The children often returned to play beside the brook, and day by day the little black-eyed bird watched them, and appeared rather to like their presence; but, sad to say, ere the little birds were fully fledged, a cruel boy discovered the nest, and carried off the young ones to meet, no doubt, an untimely end.

In the spring days which are now close at hand, you will often hear the curious notes of this little tit. It is not unlike the noise made by the sawyer at his work, and although to us the note seems a monotonous one, still it is 'blue-head's' way of expressing joy and rendering praise. He does his best; and the music of a grateful heart is not to be despised. And now, after admiring the beauty of its form, and the colour of its feathers, we will bid our little friend 'adieu,' agreeing with the poet's declaration,—

'There's not a leaf within the bower,
There's not a bird upon the tree,
There's not a dew-drop on the flower,
But bears the impress, Lord, of Thee.'

M. H.



BESSIE AND ISABEL;

OR,

PRIDE COMES BEFORE A FALL.

CHAPTER I.—ISABEL'S PARTY.



AMMA,' said Bessie Gordon, one Saturday morning, 'Harriet Gray wishes very much to go to the Sunday school.'

'And why can't she go?' asked her mother.

'Because she has too much to do on Saturday evenings. She says there is always a gathering of work waiting for her, and that she can't get to bed till late, and then she's quite tired on Sabbath mornings.'

You know what a number of little brothers and sisters she has.'

'Yes, dear,' said Mrs. Gordon, 'Harriet must be kept busy. But make haste and speak out; for I know you have some plan in your head.'

'Well then, mamma, I was thinking I might go over to help Harriet for an hour or so—may I?'

'Yes, you may; but consider whether you would like to keep it up. You have many duties at home, and your time for play is not long.'

'Oh, I don't mind that,' cried Bessie, though she was as fond of sport as any one could be. 'Harriet is very anxious to know more about the things that the Bible tells us of. She often asks me questions that I can't answer. I'll see her to-day in school, and tell her that she may expect me this evening.'

The little girl went off, feeling quite glad. She was a good and useful child of about twelve years of age, and

her great desire was not only to please her kind mamma, but to serve God. She was timid and modest, and could act better than she could speak. Harriet was delighted with her plan, and it was all settled.

In the evening, just as Bessie was putting on her hat to go, her little sister Amy, who lay ill on a sofa at the window, cried out—

‘Oh, here’s cousin Isabel coming up to the door! and she looks as if she had something to tell.’

Isabel Lawson came in. She was a year younger than Bessie, but much taller, and more womanly in her manner. She was dressed very finely; and it was plain that she thought a great deal of herself.

‘How are you, little Amy?’ she said, in a patronizing way, scarcely touching the child’s cheek with her lips. ‘Bessie, be quick and put on your best dress. I’ve called for you to come over to a party.’

Bessie looked disappointed. ‘I can’t, Isabel; I’ve got something very particular to do this evening,’ she said.

‘Nonsense!’ cried her cousin; ‘your mamma will let you come. We are to have all sorts of sport; but I can’t enjoy anything without you, dear Bessie;’ and she put her arm round her waist, and tried to draw her to the door. ‘Do come; it will be over quite early.’

Bessie then explained to her why she could not go. She would, she said, only that Harriet was waiting for her, and would be so disappointed if she broke her promise.

Isabel withdrew her arm, and turned away with an offended shake of her curls.

‘You love Harriet better than me,’ she said; ‘you would rather please her!’

‘No, indeed, Isabel; you don’t understand me at all,’ cried poor Bessie, with much anxiety, while the tears started to her eyes; for she was very fond of her cousin, though a little afraid of her.

But Miss Isabel had made up her mind to pout and be offended.

Mrs. Gordon now came in.

'I am glad to hear, Isabel, that your aunt is coming to live with you,' she said. 'I suppose you and Frank are looking forward to it with pleasure.'

The young lady again shook her curls, and looked vexed. 'If aunt is not cross, I suppose we shall like her coming well enough,' she said. 'Papa is so kind, that we may do just as we please. He is always busy.'

'That's what has spoiled you both,' thought Mrs. Gordon; and she felt for the good aunt who was coming to take up the work of reformation.

'Your Aunt Marion is a very nice, cheerful person,' she said; 'very fond of children, and clever and sensible about their education.'

Isabel went away with an idea that she would not like her aunt, and much displeased, too, with her cousin, who, she resolved, should yet repent of her choice.

Our young readers may easily see that poor Isabel had not any of the spirit of Christ in her heart.

Bessie went off to pay her visit, looking rather sorrowful. It must be owned that she repented somewhat of having promised Harriet for that evening; but soon, when she met the grateful welcome of her friend, and they were both comfortably seated, working and chatting, she felt quite satisfied. She got through her share of the work quickly and easily, for her mother had taught her to use the needle well; and then she took her Bible and hymn-book, and read aloud the lessons for next morning.

And now we must see whether Miss Isabel was so much happier after all. She and her brother Frank were children at once neglected and indulged. Their mother was dead, and their father, a wealthy professional man, was kept closely occupied. Besides, he did not understand children. They were left much with servants; plenty of money was given to them for toys and every amusement, and they had as many holidays as they pleased. Frank was a fine, good-tempered, good-natured fellow; but he was sadly careless and mischievous, and nobody had ever talked to him kindly and earnestly

about trying to watch and control himself. Isabel was vain and pert; she loved to show off before her less rich, but better trained, companions, and she had learned to put on the airs of a little mistress to the servants.

The party began, and at first Isabel played the lady hostess very well. After tea, the question was, 'What shall we do? How shall we amuse ourselves?'

'Shall we have a romp at hide-and-seek all through the house and garden?' said Frank.

'No, no!' cried his sister, sharply; 'we'd get our dresses torn. How fond boys are of rough plays! Why can't we begin with a dance?'

'Yes, yes!' exclaimed several little girls; and of course the boys had to consent, though they would rather have gone to play at once. Boys hardly ever like regular dancing. A set was formed. Isabel was vain of her dancing; but alas! she had a blundering partner; others, too, went wrong; and, to add to the confusion, the little girl at the piano broke down.

'Why, this is real fun after all!' cried some of the boys; and they began to cut all sorts of antics.

Isabel was so foolish as to be annoyed.

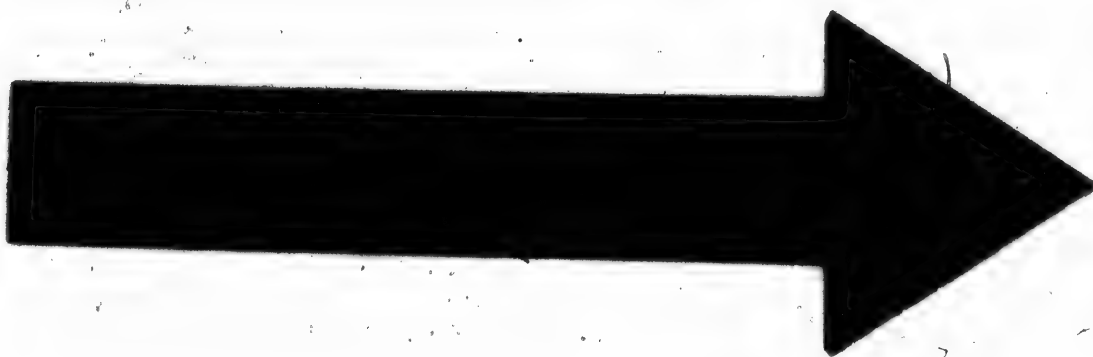
'Come,' she said; 'since some of you don't know how to dance, it is better to leave off. I'm sure I never saw such a party in my life. I didn't think any one could be so stupid and awkward.'

Isabel sometimes forgot that politeness is an important part of the character of a lady.

'What a pity Bessie Gordon is not here!' said one. 'She always looks so pleasant, no matter what happens; and she could sing us a nice song too.'

Blindman's buff, my Lady's toilet, and some other games were played next, and went off very agreeably. Then, as a rest, 'The old soldier' was introduced.

Frank appeared dressed up in an old military suit that had belonged to his grandfather, and as it was a great deal too large for him, he looked very droll. There was much amusement, as the pretended veteran went round



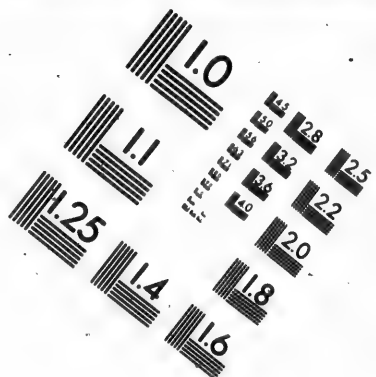
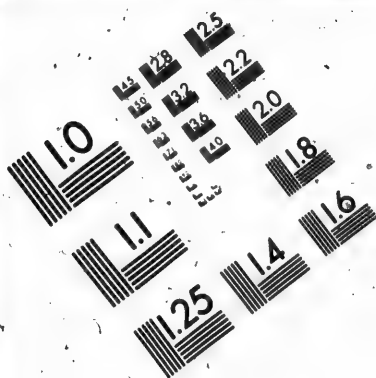
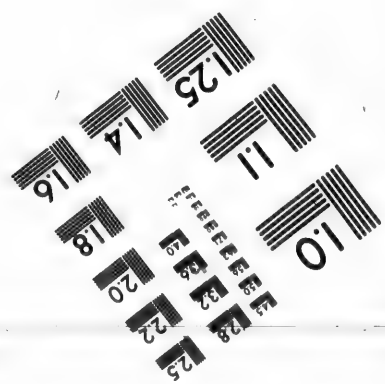
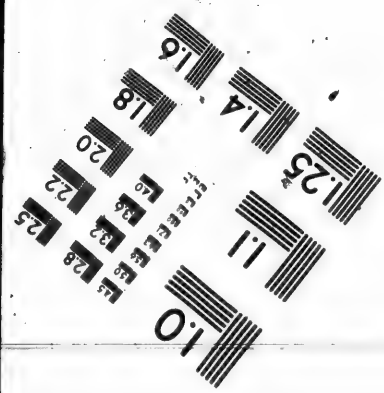
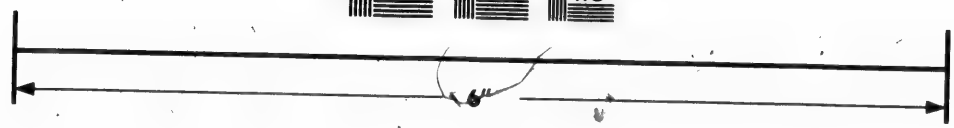
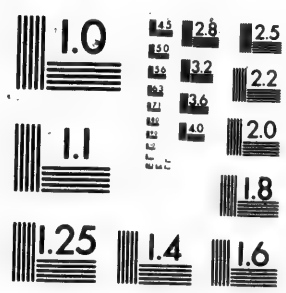


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begging for gifts, and as each of the company in turn was betrayed into saying the fatal 'yes, no, black, or white,' which entails a forfeit. One very little girl, Lizzie Green, looked ready to cry on finding that she had committed herself.

'I have nothing at all to give,' she said, mournfully.

'Oh, nonsense, child!' cried Isabel, impatiently. 'Make haste and find something; search your pocket.'

The little one clasped her two hands over her pocket fearfully.

'I have nothing that I dare give,' she almost sobbed.

'And what have you that you dare not give?' they asked. 'Come, let us see it at least.'

Lizzie at last produced a beautiful little case, containing the likeness of a boy.

'It's my brother that's dead,' she said, pleadingly, 'and mamma just let me bring it here this evening to show to Bessie Gordon; for I thought she'd have come, and I promised not to let it out of my sight.'

'We'll keep it quite safe,' said Frank, 'and you know it will be given back directly.'

'Don't take it from poor Lizzie,' cried one good young voice. 'I'll lend her a forfeit.'

But no notice was taken of the offer, and the play went on. Isabel had resolved not to be caught, and for some time she got on very well, her clever answers being admired by all, which was just what she liked. But Frank was equally determined that she should not get off.

'Well, and so your ladyship won't give the old soldier a decent *black* coat for Sundays?' he said.

'I will not,' she replied.

'You're the hardest lady I've ever come across,' he continued; 'and I'm thinking that maybe you're no lady at all.'

'Don't be impudent, sir,' cried Isabel, actually reddening.

'Ay, but I will; and if you weren't a mean person, you wouldn't wear that dirty-looking white gown, instead of giving it to some poor child.'

'It's not a dirty gown,' she exclaimed. 'You're a

blind, stupid fellow, or you'd see that it's my beautiful French white silk that papa bought at—'

She was interrupted by loud laughter and clapping of hands.

'You've said *white*! you've said *white*!' they cried; 'pay your forfeit.'

Isabel was now quite out of temper.

'It's not fair,' she screamed. 'Frank, you're a deceitful, ill-natured boy, and I'll never play with you again.'

The forfeit had to be paid, however. The play went on, and soon the time for returning the forfeits came.

Isabel, now partly recovered, was chosen as the one who should say what each child was to do before getting back his or her property. She knelt down blindfolded; and each article was held up in turn, with the question, 'What is the owner of this fine—this very fine—this superfine thing to do?' Now Isabel, like an ill-natured little girl as she was, thought it would be great fun to give her companions things that would be hard to perform, and would make them a laughing-stock to the rest; but she herself wanted to have something very easy and pretty. Her forfeit was a beautiful necklace that had belonged to her mamma; but how should she know it when held up? However, just as the first article was brought forward, she heard somebody whisper, 'Isn't it lovely? It must have cost a great deal;' so she thought that must apply to the necklace, and said that the owner was to play a tune on the piano. Among this juvenile company, Isabel was considered quite a grand performer, though her teachers complained sadly of her carelessness. Thinking herself safe now, she did not care what ridiculous offices she assigned to the others. When the last forfeit was held up, she puzzled herself to invent something specially laughable. At last she said, 'The owner of this fine—this very fine—this superfine thing, is to go round the room three times, on hands and feet, wearing a fool's cap, and with hair tied up in a tail.'

There was a shout of amusement; the bandage was

taken off, and, to her dismay, she saw, what indeed she richly deserved, that this last article was her own! The one about which she had overheard the whisper, was a gold chain belonging to one of the older boys, which she had not noticed among the forfeits. There was no help for the matter; so she had to get through her awkward feat as best she could, much to the injury of her curls, and of the new silk dress of which she was so vain. Lizzie Green's turn came last; and there the poor little thing sat trembling all over, like one of the aspen leaves in the garden. She was shy and sensitive, and the part that had fallen to her was neither easy nor agreeable.

'I can't do it,' she said, with tearful eyes. 'Do give me the likeness.'

'Well, that is cool,' cried Frank. 'You must try; nobody else has refused.'

Isabel and others urged her impatiently; but she would not—only kept crying.

Frank held the case open in his hand and twirled it about as he spoke. It fell, and the glass was smashed.

'Oh my picture!—mamma's picture that she trusted to me!' exclaimed the poor little girl, starting forward. 'It's destroyed for ever! Oh, what, what shall I do!' and she wept in utter woe. Just then a bustle was heard in the hall. Mr. Lawson was speaking to somebody, and luggage was being carried upstairs. In a few minutes the door was opened, and he entered, followed by a lady.

'Frank and Isabel,' he said, 'here's your aunt come a little sooner than we expected.' And then he went down again, leaving his sister with the children.

She had a kind, pleasant face; and she kissed her niece and nephew so affectionately, that they were almost surprised. She looked round at the party with a smile.

'Don't let me stop your plays,' she said. 'I love to see young people amusing themselves; and though I may not join in them, my heart goes with you all the same. But what's the matter? Why is this little one crying?—and this picture? I fear some accident has happened.'

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'It was my fault, aunt,' cried Frank, who was really sorry for the mischief he had done. And in a few words she explained the affair.

'Indeed, aunt,' said Isabel, thinking to excuse herself, 'I've come off nearly as badly myself. See how spoiled my dress is!'

Miss Lawson looked grave and sorry.

'I fear, my dear children,' she said, 'that after all you have not spent a pleasant evening. Don't fret, my love,' she continued, taking Lizzie on her knee. 'Leave this broken treasure with me. Tell your mamma exactly how the accident happened; and say that I will have a new glass put in it, and that then it will be as good as ever. I am sure she will not be angry with you.'

The child looked somewhat comforted; and as the hour was now growing late, the company began to take leave. When they were gone, Miss Lawson helped to put things in order before retiring to her room, though she was very tired. As she saw that her niece was in a very unhappy humour, she thought it best to make no further remark that night. In the morning, Isabel was too tired to go to the Sunday school; indeed, a very small excuse was enough to keep her away. She sat lazily on the sofa, reading a story-book, which, even on a week-day, would have been unfit for one so young. Her aunt had seen it lying about, and knew very well that it was no reading for the Sabbath, at least.

'Did your papa give you that book to read, Isabel?' she asked.

'Oh dear, no, aunt! Papa never has time to mind what books I read. I borrowed it from a girl in school; and she has plenty more to lend.'

'My dear,' said her aunt, 'your papa wishes me to look after you and Frank in everything. Now, I don't think that a nice book for a little girl. You had better return it to-morrow; and, in future, don't get a loan of anything without consulting me. You shall be at no loss for interesting reading, my love; I promise you that.'

Of course, Isabel had to close the book. She thought her aunt very unreasonable, but dared not dispute her authority; and soon she was quite engrossed in a book which Miss Lawson had brought down. She was intelligent enough; but her mind sadly needed direction.

CHAPTER II.

THE COUNTRY DRIVE.

On Monday, Miss Lawson drove over to the school to call for Isabel. She wished that they should have a long drive together, and had brought some cold dinner in the carriage. School was not over when she arrived, so she had to wait a while. Isabel was just sitting down to her music lesson in the same room, and as she was very anxious to show off fine playing before her aunt, she got through her pieces better than usual. The teacher then produced a new piece—a duet—and said that Bessie Gordon could play it with her; so Isabel was sent for her, in order to let Miss Lawson hear the air.

Now, Isabel had not been on very good terms with her cousin that day. She had talked *at* her a great deal, in boasting to the other girls about all the grandeur and delights of her ball on Saturday evening; though, indeed, poor child, she knew very well that the latter at least was untrue; but she wanted to make Bessie repent of not having been there, and to dazzle Harriet, who, she knew, had only an humble home. She was disappointed, however, to see that it did not seem to produce any effect. She was jealous, too, because Harriet sat beside Bessie, and sometimes passed her arm round her waist; and now she was not pleased at having to summon her cousin to the drawing-room to play before her aunt. Bessie came in blushing a little. Isabel seemed to have no notion of introducing her; but Miss Lawson stood up, and shook hands with her kindly.

‘My little unknown relative,’ she said, ‘I am very glad

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to see you. Your mother and I were good friends long ago, and I hope we shall be again.'

Bessie sat down at the piano with her teacher, and went through her part very nicely.

'I trust, Isabel,' said the lady, 'that you will try to learn this piece equally well. I should like very much to see you as careful.'

Isabel was mortally offended, for she thought herself far superior to Bessie.

'We are going to have a long drive,' said Miss Lawson. 'Perhaps, Isabel, your cousin would like to come with us.'

'I don't think she cares to come anywhere with me,' replied her niece.

'We will ask her,' said Miss Lawson; and she did so.

'I should like it very much indeed,' cried the little girl, looking quite bright. 'I am greatly obliged to you; but unless mamma knew, I fear—'

'Oh, she always has some excuse!' interrupted Isabel.

'I suppose, Bessie, you would rather walk with Harriet?'

'This excuse seems to be a very good one,' said Miss Lawson; 'but perhaps we can meet it. Your home is quite in our way, and we might call in and ask your mamma.'

Bessie was delighted; but Isabel whispered to her aunt—

'I'm sure I wish she wasn't coming, for I'm half out with her.'

'Hush, hush, Isabel dear, don't let me hear such a word; it is unkind and unchristian-like. Your cousin seems to be a very nice little girl; and if there has been any coolness between you, I'd like to see it made up at once.'

They called on Mrs. Gordon. She was very glad to see her old friend again, and willingly gave her daughter leave to take the drive.

The little party had a pleasant drive; but Isabel preferred talking to her aunt than to her cousin; indeed it was her way, that, when any grown-up person was present, she seemed to despise the company of girls of her own age. Miss Lawson was much pleased with Bessie.

'She is a very modest little girl,' she said, when Bessie

had taken her leave ; ' and sweet-tempered and obliging, too, I am sure. She appears to have made good progress at learning, and I was delighted with her intelligent remarks, and her clear replies to a few Bible questions which I asked her. I would not say she was quick ; yet I dare say she always knows her lessons well.'

' Yes,' said Isabel ; ' I don't think she ever gets a bad mark ; but then she takes a long time to learn her lessons, and that's great trouble.'

As yet Miss Lawson knew nothing of how Isabel learned her lessons, nor had she any idea of how jealous-minded she was, else, perhaps, she would not have praised Bessie so much just at this time, when there was no great friendliness between them. But Isabel, feeling guilty, was sure that her aunt meant to reflect on her ; she thought that the many bad marks must have been seen, and she was vexed at her weak side being discovered. There was to be a school examination soon,—premiums were to be given ; and she knew that Bessie was working hard to win some. To please her mother was Bessie's one great object ; but, besides that, she understood the value of education for its own sake, and she also knew that her friends were not rich, and that she might have to earn money for herself some day. Isabel had never got any prizes ; she was too idle to study for them ; yet, on the day of distribution she would have liked well enough the honour of carrying home some handsomely bound volume.

She now resolved that this time she *would* be victorious. We are sorry to say that her motive was a very bad one,—such as no little boy or girl should ever encourage, for God's blessing cannot follow it,—it was jealousy of Bessie, and a wish to disappoint her. She longed to win the very premiums for which her cousin was striving most anxiously, and so have her vanity pleased by letting everybody see she was the superior. We shall see whether Isabel had any reason to rejoice.

(To be continued.)

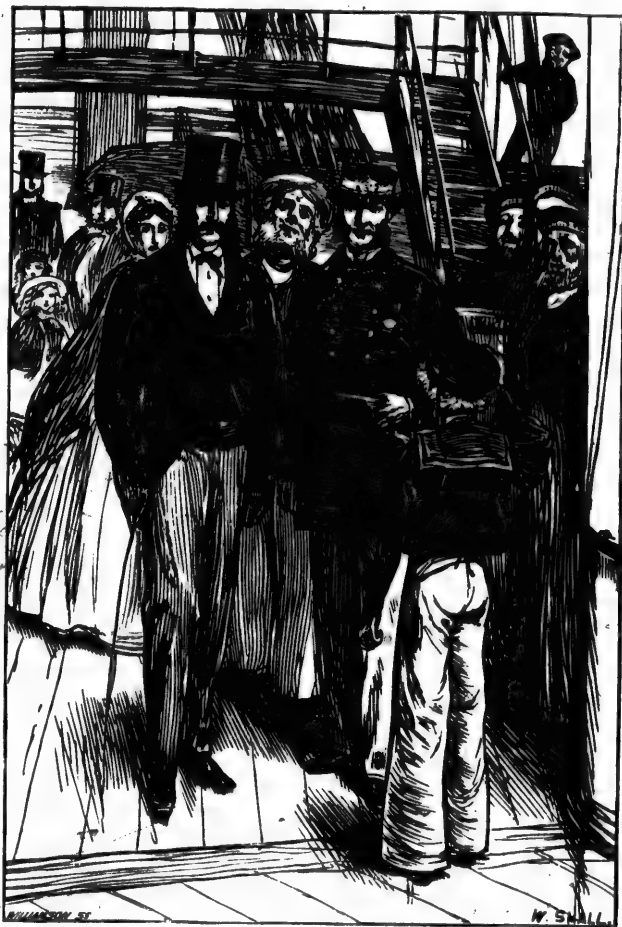


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BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE LITTLE CAPTAIN,' 'MISS MATTY,'
ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER VI.



THE family that Harrison had taken such an interest in having arrived safely in England, the gentleman made his appearance, not many days after, at the little village of Hurstcliff, and was directed to Ned Gaskin's cottage. That worthy veteran was sitting by the fire listening to Madge Dartmor reading Alf's last letter on his reaching Madras, an act which she performed daily; for, though they knew every word of it by heart, the old people were never tired of hearing those expressions of fond affection written down by their boy. In the middle of this pleasant task, they were interrupted by a gentleman stepping in at the open door, who asked if one Edward Gaskin lived there; whereupon Ned rose to his feet, and taking off his hat, made his most formal bow, as he answered, 'Here I be, your honour, at your honour's sarvice;' while Dolly hastened to dust a chair and place it for the visitor. 'I've come, my good people,' said the gentleman, 'to make some inquiries about a child that was picked up from a wreck, and, I am informed, found kindly shelter in this cottage.'

'As for the matter of shelter, sir, he was welcome to it,' said Ned, 'and there ha'n't been a moment that ever we've regretted standing out against the parson's notions of sending him to the work'us instead. He's kept my old woman there as happy as a cricket; and for the matter o' that, I won't say but what he's done the same

for me,—leastways, as Miss Madge knows, ever since he was saved, all the youngsters about got to look at me with a kindlier eye, for his sake. No doubt, he made me sort o' oneasy, when he would go to sea against all reason; and I'd have hung in the wind yet about that 'ere notion, if it hadn't been Captain Chunck made it all right and straight, and there wa'n't one had a better right to lay down his course of life, seeing as how he was the lad's own godfather.'

There is no saying how long Ned would have gone on, but Dolly took the business into her own hands, in her quiet unobtrusive way, briefly telling how the baby was found, her face colouring with honest pride as she told of her husband's part in the matter, in spite of his 'Belay there, missus, I did no more than my duty.' The few articles found upon the child she had treasured up carefully, while the baby prattle was recalled to recollection, with tears in her honest eyes. Sir George Mainwaring had omitted to ask Harrison by what name the boy was known, so that, when Dolly mentioned that the baby had called himself 'Alfy,' he gave a great start; but it passed unnoticed by Ned, who was eagerly watching for an opportunity to join in the conversation.

All this time the visitor had sat erect, hat in hand, listening quietly to her words; so quietly, that although Dolly saw by his appearance he was some great gentleman, she fancied he must be a lawyer, having no closer interest in her absent grandson. When he started, she stopped in her recital; and Ned, thinking she had had more than her share of the talking, called out, 'Avast there, missus, lay by till I tell his honour how the lad came by his name,' for Ned always considered the naming of the child the very cleverest thing his friend the Captain had ever done. After telling the whole circumstance, while a smile overspread the calm face before him, he finished off with, 'And, your honour, I often axes all round if a more suitabler could have been pitched upon, for it made him beholden to no man for a name, and

showed his situation at a glance. And so, as Alf Jetsam he lived on with us here, and as Alf Jetsam he sails upon the sea.'

The gentleman having asked to see the articles worn by the child, Dolly took him into her best room, and opening her chest, where her home-made linen was all carefully laid away, with sprigs of lavender laid between, she drew forth a little parcel. So far as the inquiries had gone, they agreed with the description of Sir George Mainwaring's lost son; but many children might have brown curls, and be called Alfred; as for the little garments, they disclosed nothing, though Sir George examined them carefully; if there ever had been any mark upon them, it was faded out by time. He longed to believe he had found his son, but he could not be certain without further proof of his identity. Feeling a little faint, he turned to open the little window wider, while Dolly was searching for something more in the chest. It was a little shell box, kept to hold her most precious articles. 'Here's something else of his, your honour,' she said, holding out a tiny blue silk bag. 'It was tied round his neck, and I sewed it up in this, for the dear boy used to threaten to break it open, being some sort of a nut.'

It proved to be a tiny cord of silver twisted filagree, with what, as Dolly said, looked very like a nut, attached to it. But Sir George recognised it to be a native Indian charm, made of sandal-wood. Dolly had never dreamt it was anything but an amulet, so she was greatly surprised when the gentleman, giving it a twist, unscrewed it in the centre, and lifted out a small gold locket. No sooner did his eyes fall upon it, than he knew it to be a locket his wife had ordered to be made, to hold his own and her hair, and on the back he himself had caused to be engraved their initials. Looking into the astonished face of the good Dolly, he was only able to say, 'Leave me, my good woman; God has restored to me my child, my long mourned for boy.'

Closing the door gently, Dolly slipped away to communicate the glad tidings to Ned and little Madge. 'For all he was so proud and stiff like,' and her own eyes were dim with tears, 'I've left him with his face in his hands, crying like a baby.'

It was only when Sir George was going away that he made known his name and position, and Ned felt almost inclined to throw up his hat and shout for joy, to think that at any rate some of his bright dreams were to be realized, that Alf should turn out the son of great parents.

Sir George some days after brought his wife to hear for herself the little history of her boy; and after Dolly had got over her nervousness at entertaining such a grand lady, on seeing how much she resembled him, the expression in her blue eyes being exactly the same, the dear old woman forgot everything but that it was Alf's mother who was sitting there asking questions of her. And yet, though Dolly was honestly glad that Alf's parents were found, her heart was sore too, for had she not lost her much-loved child? It was with a great sob that she received Lady Mainwaring's thanks for her kindness to the boy; she could not bear that, for did she not love him as if he was her very own?

'There is no cause to thank me, my lady,' she said, gently, trying to hide her real feelings. 'It was our good luck—I ought rather to have said a blessing—to have the dear child; it's we who ought to be obliged, for what would we have done without our Alf?' At these last words, Dolly broke down completely, and covering her face with her apron, moaned and wept silently at the thought that he was indeed her Alf no longer. 'You'll not grudge the boy loving me a little, for I know that, however high a gentleman he may be, Alf will never forget the old woman who stood in the place of a grandmother to him; he's been ours so long, my lady, that I got to think he'd never be claimed, and it comes hard upon me losing him now.'

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that point, explained, at Dolly's request, as far as she could, how it was that Alf had never been discovered before. It seemed that the child had been sent to Calcutta, under the care of a Major O'Hara, who promised to see him safe on board the ship 'Bombay Castle,' as his father, then merely Captain Mainwaring, was under orders to a station up the country. But the Major had lingered longer on the way than he intended, and when he arrived, he found that the ship had sailed some days before; so Alf and his nurse were placed on board another vessel. The poor mother had doubts at the time about sending her baby by such a hand, knowing how little the Major's judgment was to be relied on; but her scruples were overcome by anxiety to get the child away from the unhealthy climate. Alf was going home to her father's house; and she had sent with the Major letters to be posted after the ship sailed, which commission he performed most carefully, forgetting, however, to alter the names of the ships. When the 'Bombay Castle' arrived in England, Mr. Bolton, Mrs. Mainwaring's father, had hastened down to receive his grandson, but was told that he had never been brought on board. Letters were instantly despatched to India, but, by the time they reached there, Captain Mainwaring had been sent on an embassy to a native court, where he and his wife were detained as prisoners, and hidden carefully away in the mountains. Some time elapsed before these dreadful tidings reached the anxious relatives in England; they were at a loss to know what to do, and had to rest satisfied with the supposition that though the letters were sent off stating that the child had sailed, something had prevented his leaving, and that he was still with his parents. Major O'Hara, too, was dead, having fallen a victim to cholera, so that all trace of the child was lost. A gentleman, a merchant in Calcutta, remembered seeing a child brought on board a vessel, in which he had an important consignment; but this vessel had never reached England, or ever had been heard of afterwards. His im-

pression was, however, that this boy was an orphan, but such a time had elapsed, that he could speak with little certainty in the matter. As things turned out, Alf must have been sent in quite a different vessel, and after making a prosperous voyage, was wrecked, on the coast at Hurstcliff.

Sir George, at his wife's request, had taken a temporary house in the neighbourhood of Hurstcliff, to be near when any tidings arrived from Alf, for they were all impatient for the return of his ship. Daily visits were paid by Lady Mainwaring to the little cottage, being drawn towards the worthy inmates by their common interest in the boy. But one day, when Ned had been calculating that his vessel would just be drawing near England, a letter arrived, dated from London, from the Captain of the 'Flamborough,' telling of Alf having been made prisoner by Malay pirates.

Then, a few days after, his little chest, that had been bought and stocked with Ned's hoarded money, was sent down ; and the two women, forgetting their difference of station, mingled their sobs and tears over it. On opening it there were the presents intended for his friends ; a sandal-wood box to hold his grandmother's reels and scissors ; an elaborate carved pipe for his grandad ; and a tobacco-box for his staunch friend, Jack Sprott. He had written their names on each article as he packed them, and they seemed to the weeping Dolly like messages from the dead. The wonderful things, intended for Madge Dartmor, that young lady distinctly refused to have anything to do with, but put them tenderly back again—feather tippet, and all—declaring that none but Alf himself should take them out again ; for little Madge was certain in her own mind that he was not dead, but would return to them sometime, for had she not prayed expressly night and morning for his safety? No, Madge was quite sure, the cruel men who stole him would not be allowed to do him any harm ; for the angels could be round him still, though he *was* at the other side of the world.

Ned, too, shared her belief, though for a different reason. He was sure that such a well-made lad, and such a smart hand, would be certain to find favour in the eyes of the most cruel-hearted, if they had anything of seamen in them whatever, which, he allowed, could not be denied to pirates, heathen though they be. 'I knows the way o' them 'ere sharks,' he said to Lady Mainwaring, 'they'll spare a boy when they would kill a whole boat's crew; so don't you take on, your ladyship's honour; he'll be coming in some day when we're not expecting him, and laugh at us for being afear'd for him.'

Immediately after receiving the tidings that Alf was missing, Sir George laid the case before the proper authorities, and a despatch had been at once sent off to the naval station in the East Indies, directing search to be made. But one day, when Dolly was sitting alone by the fire, Madge Dartmor burst into the house, panting for breath, explaining, as well as her excitement would allow, that Alf was discovered, and quite safe on board Frank's ship, the 'Amethyst.'

'Oh, it's too bad of Frank,' said Madge, 'he says no more than just "Alf Jetsam is aboard; we took him from pirates," when he must know that we all have been so anxious about him. But mamma says it is so like Frank to leave out the very principal piece of news. Papa is away to tell Lady Mainwaring, and I got a whole holiday from Miss Moore, and so I ran off to tell you, and make you glad, my dear, dear Dolly.'

And now, while the sadness of the cottage is turned into joy, we will see what our hero is doing aboard the 'Amethyst.' Whatever Frank Dartmor might think of Alf, it was certain that the latter did not want for friends on board the frigate, for Harrison had taken an early opportunity to tell his messmates who and what the boy really was. Had there been nothing else, the mere knowledge of his being 'found afloat,' in his little cot, would have been enough to excite a kindly interest in the hearts of those rough seamen and weather-beaten tars; but the

additional supposition that he was to turn out the son of rich parents, made him still more popular. Harrison, too, was well liked by those around him; the strict discipline, and regularity with which all the duties were performed, making a wonderful change in his behaviour. Instead of being surly and gruff, as he had invariably been on board the 'Dove,' he became cheerful, and almost good-natured, and would join in the chorus with resounding voice, as if his whole soul was in the strain, and when any frolic was afoot, he would be as earnestly engaged in it as any of the youngsters.

And now, under the falling shades of an afternoon, late in the year, the 'Amethyst' is steadily making her way up the Channel. Alf's proper watch had not yet been called, but he came up on deck, for, like some others, he felt the strong excitement of their approach to land, with the long night coming down upon them, the tide and breeze changing around, the lighthouse being anxiously looked out for, and the lead being begun to be heaved. In addition to the ordinary feelings at such a time, the boy had to think of the changes there might be in store for him. Were the two old people well, and alive? He shuddered at the very thought of never seeing them again; and he could not help being a little frightened and sorry, too, that the pleasant life in the little cottage at Hurstcliff might come to an end if Harrison's story turned out to be true. Through all his thoughts he heard quite distinctly the deep voice of Harrison heaving the lead; 'By the deep nine,' or 'Quarter less eight;' and he could not keep from smiling when the words came sounding forth from that worthy, 'No—o gro—und,' as if he was enjoying his position of trust amazingly. But his meditations were cut short by the whistle of the boatswain's mates piping up the starboard watch on deck. The frigate was put about on the other tack, and then ensued a number of active duties and movements, amongst which the words were passed to see the anchor clear. The lights of Devonport and Plymouth were in full view, and the

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'Amethyst' soon reached her anchorage in the Hamoaze in safety.

Next morning commenced the usual bustle of boats coming and going between the frigate and the shore. But early the same day, a somewhat conspicuous addition was made to the motley throng, by the approach of a little coasting schooner, displaying a wonderful deal of bunting aloft and aloft, which immediately sent a boat alongside, with a man-servant in livery bearing a letter for the Captain.

'That surely be's the Port-Admiral's body-servant,' Alf heard one of the sailors saying to his comrade, who was looking out of an open porthole; 'he'll have come aboard to ax the Captain to a dinner ashore.' But the next minute the boatswain's whistle sounded shrilly, and every ear was bent to catch the order. It was to get the accommodation ladder rigged and in its place, and for the side boys to man the entering port. 'I'm wrong now,' said the same sailor, 'it's the Admiral himself come to dine aboard here, that's how it is.'

Alf being below, did not notice the arrival of this vessel, which was no other than the 'Dove' from Hurstcliff, and not being particularly interested in the supposed Admiral, he was busily engaged teaching a bright red and blue parrot to say, 'Pretty Madge.' This bird he had bought from one of the men, for his former playfellow, in case of the loss of his purchases contained in the 'Flamborough'; and while thus occupied, Frank Dartmor put his head down the hatchway, and called out 'Bosun's mate there, pass the word for young Jetsam of the after-guard, he's wanted on the quarter-deck.'

When Alf appeared, great was his surprise, when approaching the quarter-deck, to be met by the Captain of the 'Amethyst' himself, accompanied by a tall gentleman of stately demeanour, whose expression of countenance seemed to mark out Alf as the subject of some deep emotion. Close after followed no less a personage than Ned Gaskin; while Dolly, with a lady leaning on her

arm as if for support, came behind; and in the background of the ship's side, against the space of the entrance of the port, stood several children, under charge of the sturdy Captain Chunck, and a rather pompous-looking footman; while the head of Bilken was seen above the deck as he stood on the ladder outside, having slipped up unobserved by his master to have a peep at his old shipmate.

The next few minutes were passed by Alf in such a state of bewilderment that he could never exactly recollect what took place. Every one of the group of visitors seemed to rush upon him and clasp him in their arms, pressing kisses on his face, and shaking his arms almost out of their sockets, amidst the surprise of the frigate's officers, and to the immense admiration of the crew at the gangway, and hatchways, or up aloft. But out of the general hubbub, Alf remembered feeling a soft cheek laid against his, and heard a voice that thrilled through his very heart, saying, 'My boy, my first-born child, who does not yet know his mother!'

He had often dreamt of finding his parents, and now it was all so strange, that it seemed as if he were dreaming still, and that he would waken presently to find himself lying in his hammock down below. He was recalled to his senses at last by Ned shouting into his ear, 'Well, Mister Mainwearing, what have you got to say to your old grandad that *was*, but as is no longer?' They had gradually drawn away from him at the Captain's suggestion, for he saw the boy was ready to faint with the sudden excitement. There was a tear in the old man's eye, and a tremble in his voice, that went to Alf's heart, as much as the sound of his new found mother's had done, and grasping Ned's hand he muttered, 'If it's me you mean, I've got to say, once my grandad always my grandad.'

At these words Dolly seized hold of Alf's other hand, and while she laughed and cried by turns, faltered out, 'I knew it; I told you, my lady, how it would be; he'll

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never be too proud to own us!' whereupon Ned interposed, gruffly reminding her that this was the quarter-deck, where 'feelin's must be kept under,' though it was quite evident he found it rather difficult to restrain his own.

After the party had duly partaken of the hospitalities of the Captain's cabin, Sir George Mainwaring called Alf aside, and placed in his hands a sum of money, to be distributed for the entertainment of the crew. The moment he appeared, it became manifest what an enthusiasm had been created by his singular history, and his sudden fortune. He was seized upon, hoisted, and seated on the ready 'Queen's chair,' formed by the brawny arms of two 'captains of the tops,' who paraded him from the main-deck to the upper-deck, and back again, amidst the subdued cheering of the ship's company at large. Standing near the foot of one of the hatchway ladders, Harrison took the public opportunity to say, 'Shipmates, I'm sure I speaks all your minds when I say, that if ever this boy lives to be a Post-Captain, we'll all be right down glad to serve under him. I've know'd him longer than you, mates, and we've passed through trials and dangers together, and I've this to tell you, that though he could have got his freedom amongst them pirates, and good treatment too, he wouldn't take it, 'cause his messmates weren't to share it with him. So give us three cheers for Alf Jetsam, which he was of late, and three more for Mister Mainwearing, as is at the present time.'

After this speech of Harrison's, which was received with great applause, and many homely but heartfelt comments, the visitors got on board the 'Dove'—Harrison, with the permission of the Captain, being amongst the number—and they stood away once more for Alf's old home.

The inhabitants at Hurstcliff had been expecting some public demonstration on the part of Sir George Mainwaring, and they were not disappointed; for though there were no bonfires lighted, as the juvenile members had expected, useful presents were distributed amongst the poorer

classes, so that, during the long winter nights, when the families gathered round the comfortable hearth, watching the bright blaze dancing up the chimney, they thought and spoke of Alf, and of the kindness of that grand gentleman, his father. On the Christmas eve, too, that soon followed Alf's coming home, all the children at the Bay, old or young, were made exquisitely happy, by being invited to come up to the 'Grange,' Sir George Mainwaring's temporary residence. Mr. and Mrs. Dartmor, with Miss Moore, the governess, their two little girls, and Frank, were spending their Christmas holidays there; while Ned and Dolly, with Captain Chunch and Harrison, were similarly engaged in the housekeeper's room. A large basket, full of presents, had been placed in the hall, which Alf was to distribute to the children with his own hands; and, as Dolly said afterwards, it was the grandest sight her eyes had ever looked upon, to see her boy leading Miss Madge down the great oak staircase, followed by his sisters and brothers. Miss Madge wore on this occasion, for the especial behoof of the Hurstcliff children, the rich feather tippet, and the silver shoes, while hanging from her arm was the wonderful carved fan which Alf had got for her in India. With these gorgeous things appearing over her simple white dress, she looked to the children's eyes like one of those beautiful and good fairies of which they had heard. Alf was no less splendid. He was to leave in a few days to join his ship,—this time as a first-class cadet,—and he had his new uniform on for the first time, which being in all the glory of fresh cloth and new gold lace, threw 'Master Frank's' quite into the shade, in the estimation of the youngsters of Hurstcliff.

'You would never think, to look at him,' said Dolly, in a whisper, to Ned and the Captain, 'that he had ever been brought up in our poor cottage, he walks so brave, and holds his head with such an air, that he's just like a prince, dear boy.'

'Well, missus,' said Ned, 'ha'n't he been born a genel-

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man? His upbringing couldn't knock that out o' him, old woman. But this I says, he'd never have had his shipshape appearance if it hadn't been for my friend the Capting here. And Sir George he knows it ; an', says he to me not later than this very artemnoon, when I was a talking about it, "Yes," says his honour, "you're right, we all on us owes a deal o' thanks to Captain Chunk." "And," says I, "begging your honour's parding for being so free, we does, for money couldn't buy such valuable advice as he can give when required," and Ned cordially slapped the stout shoulder of his friend, and gazed into his face with admiring eyes.

After the village children had been entertained, and had gone home with happy hearts, Jack Sprott, who had been expressly asked by Alf for the purpose, produced his fiddle, and began playing a lively air, which set Madge and the little Mainwarings into ecstasies of delight, and the old hall rang with their mirth and laughter, especially when Captain Chunk, without previous invitation, calmly stepped out of his corner and danced an elaborate hornpipe. Little Madge declared afterwards it was the happiest night she had ever spent, and if she lived to be as old as Jack Sprott's mother, she never expected to spend a happier. Madge had been a little troubled in her mind of late, for she noticed that Frank and Alf were not such good friends as they used to be, though they both said, when she questioned them privately, that it was all nonsense. No doubt it was a joke ; but she wondered why Alf would call her brother Mr. Frank or Mr. Dartmor, even after Frank had asked him not to do it. For one morning she heard Frank say, 'Come, Alf, drop that, we're not aboard the frigate ; besides, its perfectly absurd for you to be so ceremonious—you, who have got into such a first-rate ship, while I've got to stay in that old-fashioned "Amethyst." But I shan't, for I mean to try the army now ; I'm sick tired of the sea, and that dog-hole of a middies' berth.'

Christmas night at the little cottage at Hurstcliff had

always been an especial night with old Ned for spinning yarns; and even Captain Chunck, under the effects of Dolly's home-brewed ale, would open out in the most extraordinary manner. But on this particular Christmas evening, at the Grange, with so many mariners assembled, and such a happy group of faces gathered round, the Captain so far exceeded himself—his yarns having such a thrilling effect on his audience—that Laura Mainwaring informed Madge privately, when they went to bed, that she felt her ringlets streaming out quite straight behind her head!

After the children had gone to bed, Alf lingered behind, alone with his old friends. He sat on a stool at Dolly's knee, with his arm clasped round her waist, as he had often sat when a child, listening to these same stories. Captain Chunck and Ned were at the opposite side of the fire-place, while Harrison and Jack Sprott sat in the space in front, all gazing silently into the fire. Each one was quite aware, that though the boy would never forget the past, yet, after that night, he would be far removed from them. Never more could they be on such familiar terms; for the heir of Sir George Mainwaring was a very different personage from Alf Jetsam. The silence was broken at last by Captain Chunck, who had been staring at his godson through a perfect cloud of tobacco smoke.

'Boy,' he said, 'we parts here, so to speak; we takes leave o' ye for good. But though we've got no more to do wi' yer, that is, in the way o' bein' answerable for yer conduct, we'll be right down sorry to be told, that you didn't do credit to our up-rearin'. Ye was found, Alf Jetsam, like Moses in the bulrushes;' but here the worthy Captain paused,—perhaps he broke down in the allusion, or his mind was carried away by a flood of recollections; at all events, he failed to make more of the simile, and continued, 'I'm not a hedicated man.'

Here Ned interposed, 'Yes, you be's; I'll not sit by, and give into that here notion noways.'

'No,' said the Captain, more solemnly than before, 'I knows my 'quirements better than most folks; but I've knocked about a good bit from one port to another, and I've kep' a weather-eye open, I can tell ye, and this I've learnt through right down lookin' into, that good fortin often will do a man more harm than good. I'm told that in the case o' gentlefolks, it's often harder sailing for them through shore life; for, d'ye see, there's al'ays sharkers awaiting to lead them into evil company and foolish ways. Boy, I've been thinking it over, and I comes to this notion,—if ever you're tempted into wickedness, who'll get the blame? None but that old missus you're leaning against, and this old shipmate at my side, and your godfather, here afore ye; for they'll say we neglected ye in yer youth. Boy, if ever there comes a time when you forget them catechism rules, sich as I did my best for to teach you, an' you're tempted to go clean against them, may them ears never hear it, but be lying along wi' this old hulk, in Davy Jones' locker.'

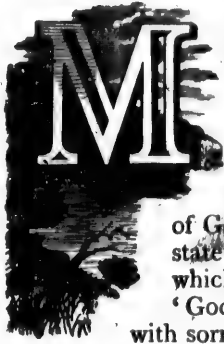
Captain Chunck's voice had grown husky, and there was a moisture in his honest eyes, as he rose and laid his hand on the boy's bent head, while his lips moved as if he were silently blessing him. Then, taking his hand, he continued, 'I've been thinking, an' its taken me a long time to make out the exact bearin's, that there's more seas than old mother ocean, on which a man can be "Found Afloat." See to it, boy, that yer head-sheets be clear, yer yards braced, and yer helm well in hand, to enter the fairway o' that harbour aloft, which you've often read to me about, aboard the old "Dove."'



'THOU GOD SEEST ME'

AN ADDRESS

BY THE REV. H. T. HOWAT, LIVERPOOL.



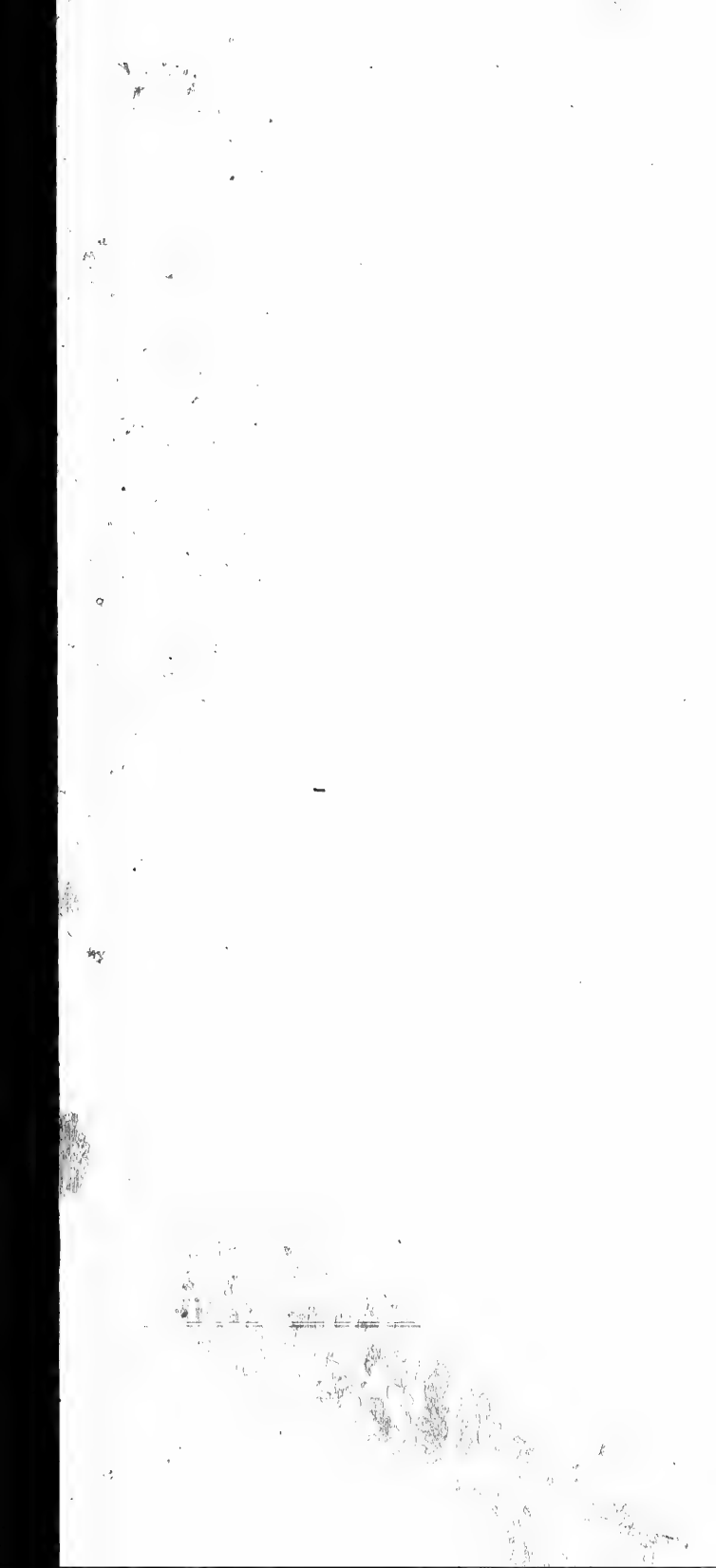
MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—I have again great pleasure in asking you to sit down with me during a little portion of your *Children's Hour*, while I try to say something that may interest and profit you on the solemn subject of the Great Eye of God. What I propose to say I shall state in the form of this simple sentence, which I shall illustrate as I go along: 'God sees all, everywhere, at all times, with sorrow or with joy.'

To begin then, let me say, *God sees all*. Your eyesight is very limited. You have seen a ship leaving port. You admired the stately vessel as it glided away; but by and by you found it had become nothing but a little speck on the waters, and was soon lost in the distance altogether. When you take your telescopes and look up at the stars on a fine frosty night you think you see a great deal, and so you do, far more than you can ever see with the naked eye; but, compared with the vastness of the universe, you have scarcely seen anything at all. The same is true in the case of that other instrument, the microscope, for, what you don't see, and what you can't see, even with its aid, is infinitely greater than all the wonders disclosed. Thus you have infinity, immensity on all sides of you, and even at the best, can only see. The Holy Scripture hath it, 'through a glass darkly.' Now, contrast this with the Great Eye of God. From Him nothing is hid. He sees everything that exists, as clearly as you see the page of this book, from

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the brightest angel who surrounds His throne, to the humblest sparrow that hops along the ground. 'Even the hairs of your head are all numbered.' You can't see into my heart, and I can't see into yours, but God can see into both. Nay, God sees you as distinctly as if you were the only person in the world. The words of Hagar were, 'Thou God seest me.' Now, many seem to think God sees only in the mass, but cannot see each particular being of which that mass is composed. There never was a greater mistake. No eye is so sharp as the Great Eye of God. When the Moravian missionaries first visited Lapland, about the middle of the eighteenth century, they began telling the people about the all-seeing God above, and how they should make Him their friend. 'No, no,' was the reply of the Laplanders, 'we shall have nothing to do with *your* God. He's too quick-sighted for us. He sees too much. We prefer to remain as we are.' It was a reply worthy of savages, for the poor Laplanders at that period were little better; but surely it can never be worthy of inhabitants of a Christian land like ours—men, women, or children, with the knowledge of how minutely God sees and surveys them all—to turn round and say, 'We prefer to live as we please,' careless whether they make God a friend or a foe. Remember, then, my dear children, God sees you all, and sees each one of you, knows your hearts better than you know them yourselves; and, while never preventing you from anything useful or innocent, wishes you daily to live as 'seeing Him who is invisible.'

Again, God sees all, *everywhere*. There now, John, Jessie, Mary, as you sit by the side of your dear mammas, busy with your lessons of an evening, you all see each other. But next morning, when John goes away to his school, and Jessie and Mary go to theirs, and you are separated, you neither see your mamma nor one another for several hours. I have no doubt you often wonder what the other is doing; but you don't know, you can't see,—you must wait till evening comes again, when you



can meet. The Great Eye of God, however, is not so confined in its range of vision. It sees the little Hindoo babe left by its mother to perish on the banks of the Ganges, as well as that dear little baby-brother, you, Jane, stoop down to kiss in its little cot. Now I know, James, that you have a father at sea, and he is a good man, and loves you, as I feel certain you love him. You are often afraid for him at night, when the wind is whistling round the corner of the house, and you are perhaps praying your little prayer for him: 'God bring my dear papa in safety home.' James, my boy, your one Father sees your other father, wherever he may be; and where can he be safer than with the Almighty as well as the All-seeing One, 'who holdeth the waters' (and therefore your dear parent on them) 'in the hollow of His hand?'

During one of the wars of the first Napoleon, he took prisoner a distinguished general of the opposite army. He was exceedingly anxious to prevent him making his escape, and so he shut him up in a cell, in the door of which he made a little aperture, and through which aperture the eye of a sentinel was constantly watching. Every movement of the prisoner, unknown to himself, was carefully marked. Did he rise? did he lie down? did he walk about?—every action was witnessed. Through the long hours of the day, through the weary hours of the night, that sentinel eye kept ceaseless vigil, nor was it removed till the prisoner himself, after a variety of negotiations, was permitted to go free. I never remember that story in French history, but I think of the Great Eye of God, unseen by us, yet noting our every deed. I ask you, my dear children, would life be so frittered away, as it is by hundreds—would time be so misspent, and privilege so misimproved—would there be anything like the wickedness in the world that there is—if men kept ever before them the thought of this great sentinel eye of God, seeing them under all circumstances, and reading them through and through?

I remark again, God sees all, everywhere, *at all times*. Now, Eliza, I don't know if you are aware that every night before your dear mamma retires to rest herself, she looks in at your little bedroom to see if you and Susan are sleeping comfortably. You don't see your mamma on such occasions, but she sees you, and cannot go to her own room before she has gone to yours, and satisfied herself that you are both folded for the night in peace. Night and day, however, are alike to the sleepless eye of God ; and what a comforting thought it is, that when no mortal eye sees us, the Great Eye of God is watching over us, and that the 'Lord Himself is our keeper!' I know, Alexander, you are a good little boy. I know you would never think of going to bed without commending yourself, soul and body, to God in that beautifully simple language, which I never hear but it brings the tears to my eyes. Right, Alexander, right. Oh, how I wonder that any one can rise in the morning or lie down at night, without ever once thinking of bending the knee to God,—lying down like a dog, and shaking themselves up like the same ! Have they no remembrance of Him who sees it all ?

By and by, my young friends, especially you boys, will be knowing something of politics. Even already some of you may have heard of Pitt and Fox, two rival politicians, who occupied an important position in this country towards the latter half of last century. The former, especially, was a great parliamentary orator ; and the power of his look is said to have been something terrible. So much, indeed, was this the case, that often at the close of a stormy debate, when Pitt had risen to the very height of eloquence, Fox might have been seen walking in some secluded corridor or passage, absorbed in his own thoughts, and muttering to himself, every now and then, 'That eye, that eye.' I never think of these words, but I look upwards, and say of the All-seeing One, '*That eye, that eye.*' Would to God, my dear children, that hundreds of thousands, even in this Christian land, thought more of it than they do. In the first instance, let it be your con-

cern to look to yourselves ; and with God's fear *within* you, you need never be afraid of God's eye *upon* you, for that eye will then be directed to you, not in the flash of vengeance, but with the radiance of a sunbeam, and you will then know the meaning of that precious text of David : 'Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound ; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance.'

My last remark is, God sees all, everywhere, at all times, *with sorrow or with joy*. On this I shall not enlarge. We 'grieve the Holy Spirit of God,' when we fail to obey God's commands as God directs. We give gladness, on the other hand, to God's great and loving heart, when He sees us, like Zacharias and Elisabeth of old, 'walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.'

Let it be your ambition, then, my dear young friends, to make Him happy, who has given to you all the happiness you possess. It is surely a very simple way to make God happy, by having His will for your law, His salvation for your trust, His approbation for your daily aim. I have shown you how God sees you always and everywhere ; let Him then always and everywhere see you with delight. And that you may be kept from offending Him, put your steps in the steps of Jesus, and become 'followers of God as dear children.' Some three hundred years ago, a little boy, in the ancient and interesting city of Antwerp, was looking up at a great painting. He was seized with the greatest admiration, and exclaimed to a friend at his side, 'I too shall be a painter.' He did become a painter, and a painter almost as celebrated as the other whose production he had beheld with so much real pleasure. The name of the little boy was Rubens, the name of his great predecessor in painting was Raphael. My dear children, here is a motto for you : 'I, too, shall be like Jesus ;' and if you are or seek to be, no language of mine can tell you all the joy you will give to your heavenly Father, who, among all the sights He desires

on earth, desires none so much as this, to see 'all men coming to the knowledge of the truth,' and all of you His 'little flock,' rising up, like so many Samuels, ready at His call, and willing for His work, exclaiming, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'

SKETCHES IN INDIA.

HOMeward BOUND.



THE title of 'Sketches in India' is no longer suited to my story. We have reached Alexandria, as you may remember, on our way home. We have parted from the Indian steamer at Suez; and now we have nothing more to do with black faces, red turbans, punkahs, cockroaches, etc.; and the air seems to grow fresher and cooler every minute, so that the invalids lift up their heads and revive, and everybody is glad to put on warmer clothing.

After a night in a comfortable hotel at Alexandria, we rose early and drove to the shore, where a little steamer was ready to convey us to our big steamer, the 'Massilia,' a noble vessel. I never saw a stranger mixture of people—black, brown, white, and yellow—than the crowd whom we left standing on the quay, as our little steamer puffed away. There were not only English, French, and Italians, mixed with the native Egyptians and Turks, but there were also negroes and Ethiopians of various tribes, with faces as black as coals, and not a few Hindoos were also there, with their slender figures and white cotton dresses; but the noisiest and most active of all were the bustling Arab sailors, shouting at the top of their voices.

At last we got away from them all, and got ourselves comfortably settled on board the 'Massilia;' and soon we were gliding over the waters of the 'blue Mediterranean,' and leaving the white buildings and sandy shores of Alexandria far behind.

One morning we observed the clouds gathering in heavy masses, with bright gleams of sunshine between. At last one of these clouds seemed to grow darker and darker, and to come down nearer and nearer to the surface of the sea, while the waves rose up as if to meet it, and formed a sort of column between sea and sky, in a very curious manner. This we were told was a water-spout; and we were glad it was not very near us, as it might have broken upon our ship.

At night I loved to watch the waves dashing in the track which the vessel made as she passed on; the water seemed full of fiery sparks, and sometimes great balls of light rose and sank and glided away in the long shining path behind us; every wave appeared to glitter as it broke, and we seemed sailing through a sea of stars. This beautiful appearance is sometimes seen on our own seas; but is much more common in the warm south, and is caused by numberless little creatures that live in the water, and have the strange property of sparkling and shining in the dark when the water is agitated.

On the fourth day after leaving Alexandria we saw before us the rocky shores of the famous island of Malta, and we soon found ourselves gliding in calm water into the harbour of Valetta, the chief city of that island. All around us the shores were covered with strong fortifications, and guns grinning at us in every direction, as if saying, '*Touch me if you dare!*' and above the high strong walls were seen fine buildings, and spires, and towers of churches, looking quite brilliant and beautiful in the bright sunshine. The harbour was full of ships and gay pretty little boats; and as our big ship required to take in a good supply of food, in the shape of coals, to feed its great hungry steam engine, we had several hours to

wait at Malta, and were glad to get into one of these little boats, and go ashore to see what we could of the place.

We went up a very steep street called the Street of the Knights, and then we came to a fine palace which was once the abode of the Grand Master of the knights. The island of Malta has been in the hands of the English ever since the beginning of this century ; but before that it belonged for two hundred and seventy years to a famous set of gallant soldiers, called the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, or the Knights of Malta. They were half soldiers, half monks ; and were under vows to defend the island against all Turks and Saracens, that it might be a sort of bulwark to Europe against the Mussulmans.

The account of the way in which they did defend it, in the year 1565, during a long and most terrible siege by the Turks, is one of the most interesting narratives of the kind that I ever read. The town Valetta was named after La Valette, the brave old Grand Master, under whom they fought during that celebrated siege. It was those knights that built most of the fine churches and palaces and houses in this place ; but after the French took the island in 1798, the Order was dissolved, and those buildings are now all that remain of them.

But we had something to see at Malta that was far more interesting than old stone walls. Flags were flying, and bells were ringing, to our great surprise, as we entered the town ; and, on inquiring, we found that it was all in honour of visitors no less distinguished than the Prince of Wales and the Crown Princess of Prussia, who had arrived that morning in Malta, and were to review the troops there that afternoon. We spent the interval before going to the review in visiting the fine old church of St. John—a Roman Catholic church, renowned for its splendid paintings and sculptures and marble ornaments, such as are only to be seen in Italian churches. It also contains the tombs of many of the knights ; but we had not much time to spare to examine them. Neither

had we much time to spend among the tempting shops of Valetta, which was all the better for our purses, as the shopkeepers seemed to think that Indians were just made of money, and charged immense prices for the pretty gold filagree ornaments and beautiful lace shawls which are the chief things made there. We drove out to an open space outside the fortifications, and had a very good sight, not only of the review, but of the Prince and Princess, whom we little expected to have had the pleasure of seeing there.

It was scarcely possible to get along the streets in peace, for the numbers of beggars of all sorts who tormented us in Malta. We were also besieged by people selling all kinds of things—lace, coral, fruit, flowers, canaries—even puppy dogs! So that, amidst all these temptations, it was not easy to get back to the ship without having our pockets emptied.

The 'coaling' of a steamer is a most disagreeable and dirty business. When we returned to our cabins we found everything that had not been carefully covered up or laid by quite black with coal dust; and it is impossible to describe the amount of washing and sweeping, rubbing and scrubbing that it took, before the sailors could get the ship all made clean again; indeed, they were nearly two days before they got it right, for a good ship *must* be kept clean, and the decks are washed to such a degree that you might sup your porridge from them any morning.

After this, we had some days of rather rough weather as we held on our course westward, passing the mountains of Sicily on our right, and then the coast of Africa, with the high promontory of Cape Bon on our left; and so on, till we came near the coast of Spain. Then we saw, on our right again, a grand lofty range of mountains, with cliffs sinking down to the sea, all rosy in the sunset, and summits crowned with snow, among which the clouds rested; this was the Sierra Nevada, the highest mountain range in Spain.

Early the next morning I was awakened by the sudden

stopping of the ship, and, on looking out of the port (which means the window) of my cabin, I saw what seemed a great wall rising up in a dark mass before me, and lights twinkling here and there on its face. And this was the Rock of Gibraltar.

Having a short time to spend, we resolved to land; and as soon as it was daylight we went ashore. The town of Gibraltar lies upon the western side of the far-famed rock; and I believe the only landing-places are on that side, as all the other sides are full of craggy precipices. The Bay of Gibraltar lies to the west of the rock, and is covered with ships and boats of all kinds and sizes. To the south lie the Straits which join the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and beyond them rise the lofty mountains of Africa. One of these stands directly opposite the rock of Gibraltar; and these two hills on the two opposite shores of the Straits, were anciently called the Pillars of Hercules. Jebel Muza, the African mountain, is by far the highest and grandest. It is a vast wilderness of lonely peaks and precipices, inhabited only by wild beasts; while Gibraltar, on the other side, is one of the most busy, bustling places in the world, all pierced with caves and galleries, full of guns, defended by fortifications, and inhabited by a multitude of people of all nations, besides the troops of soldiers who are always quartered there. It was first taken by the English, under Sir George Rooke, in 1704; they have held it fast ever since, in spite of all attacks, and there is always a strong garrison there to keep it. No one is allowed to land on it after a certain hour at night, or before a certain hour in the morning; and we were so early, that we had to wait a while before we could get in. A hill on the other side of the Bay goes by the name of the Queen of Spain's Seat; and the story is, that when the place fell into the hands of the English, the poor Queen of Spain was in such distress, that she sat there for three days in despair gazing at it!—which could not do much good.

We were at first too early for shopping, and had not time to **take** a long walk. At last some of our party, who wished to purchase Spanish lace, got a man to take us to an old woman who sold it; and we climbed up the stairs of a very high house, and astonished the lace woman, who had scarcely had time to open her eyes in the morning, by making magnificent purchases from her. When we came down from her lofty abode, we found the streets all busy with country people, come in to sell their produce at the market; fine handsome men and women, with their dark Spanish eyes and picturesque dresses, riding on or walking beside sleek mules with showy trappings, and baskets of all sorts of fruit—figs, grapes, oranges, etc. We took a look at some of the Moorish shops, and admired the pretty ornaments, baskets, and embroidered work which they displayed; and then it was time for us to go back to our floating home.

Beautiful were the views we got, as we sailed away and looked back on the bold precipice of the rock, and the town and Bay at its foot, surrounded and encircled by fine mountains, both on the Spanish and African shores. We soon entered the Straits, where the current runs like a river from the Atlantic into the Mediterranean. No wonder the ancients, with their poor ships, long thought it was a hopeless thing to attempt to pass the 'Pillars of Hercules;' but what was such a formidable matter to them, was no trouble at all to the 'Massilia,' with her good strong steam engine. So we soon passed Cape Tarifa and Cape Trafalgar, near which the great battle was fought, and Cape St. Vincent, renowned for another great sea fight; and then we turned north, along the Portuguese coast, and we saw the mouth of the Tagus, and Belem Castle, which defends Lisbon; and we admired the beautiful situation of Cintra, called the Portuguese Paradise; and so on till we came to the coast of Spain again, and at last took leave of it at Cape Finisterre, with its black rocks and wild precipices. And now we had to cross the dreaded Bay of Biscay, where I had

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quite expected a fearful tossing; but the bay was as quiet as possible, and only rocked us like a cradle on the face of its long, oily, smooth waves. The worst part of all was our own English Channel. It blew hard as we entered it, and soon the sea was rolling fearfully; but we were by this time too good sailors to mind it much, and the near end of our voyage put us all in good spirits; even the children only laughed when the plates went flying here and there, and when no one could cross the saloon without a risk of being pitched into somebody's lap. None of us, however, could go on deck, and the waves every now and then gave the ship a blow that made her shudder. When the worst was over, I went up and saw the grand sight of the ocean in its pride. Our great vessel, which seemed like a castle for size and strength, was lifted up and down like a cork; at one moment we could see nothing but one great wave like a wall, the next moment we were on the top of that wave, looking over a waste of wild grey waters, with a gleam of pale yellow sunset light overhead, and before us—the coast of England! Our invalids raised their heads to greet it, and the children were lifted up to look at it. Very soon we got into quiet waters as we passed Hurst Castle and reached the Solent, and by midnight the 'Mas-silia' had safely dropped her anchor at Southampton, just four weeks from the time when we sailed from Bombay.

I need add no more. I need not tell you of happy meetings and warm welcomes; nor need I say what thanksgivings arose to Him who had kept us in our going out and coming in, and whose hand had been with us for good all through our journey. There is another journey on which we are all embarked, and

‘There is a happy land,
Far, far away,’

to which we are travelling. May the Lord our God be our Guide, and bring us all safe there!

M. A. S. M.

STORIES ABOUT BIRDS.

THE BLACKBIRD.



THE cold winter months are past; the early spring flowers are appearing; crocuses, snowdrops, hepaticas, and even violets, are sprinkling the ground; and 'the time of the singing of birds is come.' Some of the larger birds are already beginning to build their nests, and are warbling forth their songs of joy; not that the full melodious gush of song which cheers our ears in the more advanced spring months is yet heard, but still, on some mild day, the little songsters are trying their notes, as if in preparation for the grand singing season.

Perched on the top branch of a graceful birch-tree, whistling in rich notes, is the bird we are going to tell you about—the well-known Blackbird. I need not describe him; the youngest of my readers knows well the black

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glossy feathers, and bright orange-coloured bill of 'blackie'; and I am sure all of you love to listen to his clear musical notes, so often heard in spring and summer evenings, mingling even in the midst of the merry voices which make vocal 'the children's hour.' As the blackbird builds so early in the season, ere the budding trees have yet burst into leaf, it often seeks out some evergreen tree or bush, where its clay-lined nest will be more concealed from view. Its eggs are not famed for beauty; and certainly, when the little birds first make their appearance, they are ugly enough. The blackies, like many of the other birds we have told you of, are much attached to their young, and busy work the parent birds have in supplying their wants. The following anecdote illustrative of their affection has been told us as true.

A couple of blackbirds had built their nest in a tree in the beautiful park at Windsor; patiently had the hen bird sat on the eggs, cheered by the sweet notes of her mate; at last her patience was rewarded by the appearance of five little ones. Immediately the work of feeding began; back and forwards flew the parent birds in search of food. One day they had both flown off together, and gone a longer distance than usual. They remained absent for some time, thinking no doubt that their little ones were quite safe in the nest in the old tree; but alas! it was not so, foes were near them—not wild beasts, nor even hungry cats in search of food, but some thoughtless school-boys, intent only on their own pleasure, unmindful of the comfort of the poor little birds. They espied the nest, and taking it down from the tree, carried it off, young ones and all; they had no intention of killing them, but thought it would be good fun to keep them, and bring them up themselves. Poor fun it would have proved to the birdies had the boys carried out their intentions; but, after having gone a short distance, they observed the parent blackies following them, attracted by the cries of their young ones. At first they kept a good way off, but gradually got nearer, all the while uttering a wailing note. Arrived at their

home (a house in Windsor), the boys placed the birds in a cage, which they hung up outside the window. No sooner were they settled than the parent birds fed them, and continued to do so for several days; the young birds grew well, and were sold one by one to people desirous of possessing a blackbird. The last one was sold, but the cage still remained outside; and one morning, when one of the boys went to take it in, he found the mother bird lying stiff and dead below it, having been unable to survive the loss of her offspring.

Blackbirds, it is alleged, do great mischief in our gardens; and we cannot dispute that they love our fruit-trees and bushes, and a bunch of ripe cherries is their special delight. But considering the sweetness of their song, I don't think we need grudge them a few, even though we don't go the length of saying (as we heard a friend do lately), that the most delightful sight she knows is a number of blackbirds feasting on a tree of ripe cherries.

There are plenty more stories about our little songsters; some of which we hope to tell, trusting that our 'considering the fowls of the air' may continue to prove useful and pleasant to our readers. Great men as well as little children have been taught by a tiny bird.

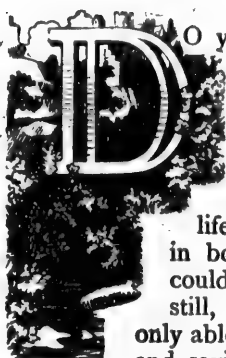
Luther one evening, when perplexed and careworn, sat watching a little bird going to roost, and learnt a lesson from it of trust in God. 'Ah!' he said, 'the little bird puts its head under its wing and goes to sleep, leaving God to think for it; surely then I can trust Him to take care of me.'

M. H.



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LITTLE GATHERERS.



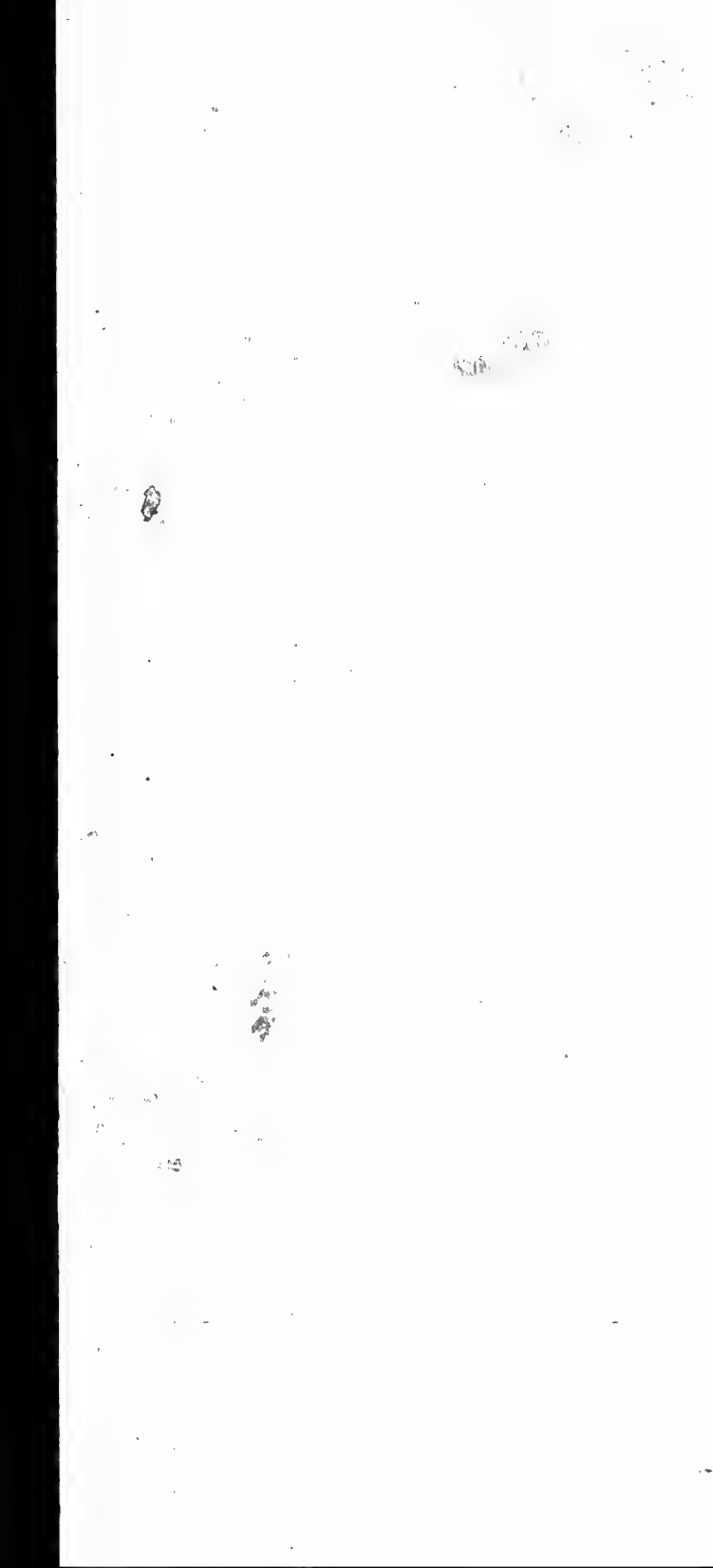
Do you see that group of children in the bow-window, evidently engaged in some very interesting and important business? Shall we step behind that curtain and hear what it is? Eavesdropping, it is quite true, is very wrong and very mean in real life; but it does not seem at all wrong in books; indeed, a great many books could not be written without it. Stranger still, in some books the listeners are not only able to tell what the people are doing and saying, but also what they are thinking.

I don't at all pretend to be so clever as that; but at least I shall hear and tell you what they say.

'Certainly, it would be very nice to surprise her; but is there anything else we can try to be? She has talked to us about so very many.'

'I have thought of one thing that will perhaps do. A little anecdote I heard the other day put it into my head. In a boarding-school for poor children near Dublin, one of the visiting ladies observed that a great deal of bread was wasted by the children leaving little bits. So she told them that if they gathered all the little bits of bread and the crumbs, and kept them for the week, they should have a pudding on Sunday; that she would provide the milk, and sugar, and fruit. They were delighted, and not one crumb was wasted. They had quite a dishful on Saturday when their kind friend came, and they never enjoyed a pudding so much, first making it, and then eating it. Don't you think we might be little gatherers? I am sure Auntie would like that very much.'

The story and the suggestion were most cordially received, and one of the company advised that, for the



next week, they should each watch what they could gather and save from being wasted.

'And then,' said another, 'we can have a meeting, and make speeches, and have some one in the chair; and we can tell each other what we have done.'

This proposal was welcomed with acclamation. They almost danced and shouted at the thought of so novel and pleasant a game.

I thought it now high time to leave my hiding-place, lest I should be discovered; but before I left, I heard one little word that gave me great pleasure. It was, that I was to be invited to attend the meeting; so I shall be able to tell you all about it.

The meeting has been held, and this is its true and full history:—

Early in the morning I received an invitation written on very grand pink paper—

'MADAM,—You are requested to attend a meeting of the Society of Little Gatherers, to be held in the school-room, at the hour of twelve precisely.'

You may be sure I was not late; yet when I entered the schoolroom, I found the nine children already assembled: our four old friends, their two brothers, Annie Seton, and two other little visitors. All voices were hushed as I entered; and I suspect their grave demeanour was an amusing contrast to the fun that had been going on. I was conducted with all ceremony to a seat, and, after a moment, was unanimously requested to take the chair—an honour I could not be so ungracious as to decline. I was handed a list of the speakers. I understood that resolutions had been thought of; but somehow they were not resolved on.

I rose and spoke a few words of congratulation at the large and influential attendance at this the first meeting of the noble and novel Society of Little Gatherers; that I was sure we should all be interested and edified by the details with which the speakers would now favour us; and I called on Miss Katie to make the first speech.

Making a low bow, first to the chair, and then to the company, she said : ' Mrs. Chairwoman, ladies, and gentlemen,—I cannot find words to express my sense of the honour you have conferred on me, in allowing me to address you on a subject which lies so very near my heart. It has occurred to me that our society may adopt as its emblem a bee, for is she not a most busy little gatherer ? .Hear the great Dr. Watts :

" She gathers honey all the day
From every opening flower."

(Great applause.) As to my efforts in behalf of our society in this the first week of its existence, I beg to state that, having observed with surprise and regret that a lady, who shall be nameless, who employs a great part of her time in knitting warm woollen boots for little babies, threw away all the little ends of her wool, I said to myself, " Here is an opportunity for advancing the claims of our society ;" so I begged her to put them all by for me. So here' (holding up a ball of wool of all colours) ' is the result of one week's saving. What will be the result of such saving in fifty-two weeks, think you ? But, ladies and gentlemen, this wool is not collected to be looked at and admired ; it is destined for nobler ends—even to be knit into boots for the little baby at our lodge. And instead of the sad and painful sight of the little red and blue feet, you will soon see warm boots of red, and blue, and pink, and white.' (Great cheering, during which Katie resumed her seat.)

Again I rose, and, with a few words of encouragement, I called on the youngest member of the society, Miss Edith, to be so good as to give us the benefit of her experience.

With very glowing cheeks, and eyes that shyness filled almost to overflowing, she said : ' Indeed I don't know how to make a speech ; but I do want to be a little gatherer, because I am sure it is right, and, besides, it will please Aunt Kate,—I mean our chairwoman. I thought first of gathering the crumbs ; but then they are always gathered for the birds : so that would not do. I

was afraid I could not be a little gatherer at all, when one night that I lay awake, thinking what I could do, I remembered hearing of pillows being made with little bits of paper. So I asked mamma about it, and she has promised me all the old envelopes and parts of letters that have no writing on them, and I tear them up into little shreds like these ; and nurse will save up for me all the little bits she can of print and calico, to make patch-work covers for the pillows, and I am to give them to my favourite poor people. Now, I don't think I have anything more to say, so I had better say no more.'

The dear child's speech was received with an uproar of applause, especially its most sensible conclusion, which I heartily wish older speakers would adopt as their own. Silence being restored, I called on Master Charles to tell us what he was doing and intended to do as a member of the society.

With a good deal more awkwardness than his sisters had shown, evidently much puzzled how he was to begin, he rose, and said : ' Ladies and gentlemen,'—and came to a full stop ; but in another moment set off at a gallop, as if anxious to get it over as soon as possible. I cannot say that at first his manner was either calm or graceful ; but he improved. ' I joined your useful society, ladies and gentlemen ; yet, on looking about me, I was rather afraid I should find nothing to gather in this well-regulated household,—nothing seemed to be wasted, everything to be turned to account ; yet I do save odds and ends of paper for Edie ; I do help Katie to join together little scraps of wool ; and, on my own account, I have collected a wheel-barrowful of cones in the fir wood, and given them to poor old Ellen Thomas, the desolate orphan, as she calls herself, to help her fire ; and I expect to have another good supply of them before the end of the week. Then, when I return to the halls of learning, whence I have lately come, I may find more opportunities of advancing your interests, at least I shall do my best to enlist new members in our band, and thus

gather little gatherers ; so I throw myself on your mercy, and hope earnestly that you will not drive me from the hive as a useless drone.'

Loud and hearty cheers told plainly that such was not the verdict of the assembly.

Harry Vernon, a boy by no means burdened with bashfulness, followed :

'Madam, ladies and gentlemen,—The painful difficulty so graphically described by the preceding speaker, has been still more painfully experienced by me. Everything, to a crumb of bread, to a withered twig, to a shred of paper, has been seized on. Again, to compare ourselves to bees, not one flower, even the smallest, the most insignificant, had been left for me, from which I might suck honey. But, madam, "Never give up," is my motto, and I did not give up. My perseverance was soon rewarded. I discovered with surprise, not, I must allow, altogether unmixed with pleasure, that the wooden reels on which sewing cotton is wound, were, when the cotton was used, invariably wasted. Here then was a source of wealth for our society. I begged them from fair friends ; and already I have received one dozen and a half. With great ingenuity, and no small amount of trouble, I have with them manufactured these pretty and original toys.' Here Harry held up a very cleverly contrived little carriage, made of three reels, and in which was seated a paper doll dressed as a Red Riding-hood. The toy elicited immense applause. When his voice could again be heard, he added, 'These toys are intended for little children who are poor or sick ; and we may hope that they will beguile many a weary hour, and bring a smile of pleasure to many a languid eye.' The extreme modesty of this speech seemed to be as highly appreciated, as the real ingenuity of the toy.

Lizzie then made a short but very wise speech ; I must only give a sketch of it. She advised the careful saving of little scraps of time, as well as of more tangible materials. She told of a physician in London, in large

practice, who made himself master of several languages, by merely devoting to their study the few minutes occupied in his very quick drives from one patient to another. She described the manufacture of the pudding, made of the bits of bread the servant had kept for her from the breakfast and dinner-table, while the fruit and sugar had been bought at the village shop with their own pennies ; it had been made in the schoolroom, and eaten with great approval by the gardener's family. She thought money, if it were only a penny now and a half-penny again, might be put by to help others, instead of being spent, on their own gratification. In fact, as I listened, it seemed as if there was no end of the work that might be done by the society.

I had now come to the end of my list of speakers, and was considering what was to be done next ; but Lizzie had scarcely finished, when, with one voice, they called on me for a speech. I could not refuse, yet it was with a heart almost too full for words that I stood up and said :

‘Ladies and gentlemen,—This meeting began, it is true, in play, yet it has taken a very solemn colouring, to my mind, as I have heard how each and all have been trying to fulfil the words of Him who said, “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.” True, the words have not been on the lips, but I am sure the thought has been in the heart, of the speakers. Now I want to remind them of another of His words. I want each one not only to gather for Him and with Him, but to come to Him that He may gather us ; for does He not say, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings !” And the words are as loving, as tender, for each one of us, as for Jerusalem of old. Oh, may He never add of any of us,—“but ye would not.”

‘Is not He the Shepherd, strong and gentle, who goes after His straying sheep until He find him ; who loved him so as to give his own life to save him ; who stooped from heaven itself, to take the little lamb that had

wandered ever so far, and is weary and frightened ; who gathers him with His arms and carries him in His bosom, — carries him every step of the way, till He brings him in safety to the beautiful and holy home He has gone to make ready for him? Then, when He comes again as Lord of the harvest, each one shall be as precious wheat gathered into the heavenly garner. And not only gathered there safely himself, but, it may be, that He will have given him the great “ blessing of being the means of gathering others to Him, before it shall be too late to come and the door shall have been shut.”

Thus closed our meeting. I wonder, will the report of it induce many of my readers to join our little band? Will you be a Little Gatherer? K.

THE SWEET STORY OF OLD.

It was a summer evening,
And the sun was almost set ;
Though round about the cottage door
Some last rays lingered yet,
And played with loving touches,
Before a fair-haired child,
Whose eyes were fastened on her book,
And as she read, she smiled.

I watched her very wond'ringly,
As her finger traced the page :
What was the book that so engrossed
A child of tender age?
But still she hurried on and on,
Nor seemed to heed me there ;
When suddenly she raised her eyes,
And breathed a word of prayer.

And then I knew that she was blind,
That she could never see ;
For vacantly those deep blue eyes
Were gazing straight at me.
And though smiles played about her mouth,
Her eyes were blank as night ;
And when I questioned them with mine,
They gave no answering light.

I must have made a movement,
For a change came o'er her face ;
And fearfully she turned her head,—
'There is some one in this place !'
'A friend, my little maiden,
Who would only wish you well :
What is that book you read so fast,
Will you its story tell ?'

She reached me out her little hand,—
'Come in with me,' she said ;
'Oh, don't you know this wondrous tale,
Which all that run may read ?
Have you not heard of Jesus,
Who died upon the tree ?
Have you not heard of Jesus,
Who died for you and me ?'

'What ! 'twas the Bible that you read,—
A child so young as you ?'
She smiled : 'What could I read besides
So beautiful and true ?'

It says the great good Shepherd
Love's little lambs the best ;
And keeps them safe from sin and harm,
Within His sheltering breast.

'You see that I am blind?' she asked,
'That makes me love Him best :
I know that in the other world,
I shall be doubly blest.
My eyes will wake in heaven,
Will open there to see
That the great and glorious Saviour
'Is looking upon me.

'I love to come to th' open door,
When the sun is almost gone,
For with his slant rays on my face,
I know the day is done.
And I like to wait there thinking,
Till comes the fall of night,
For then the verse rings in my ears,
'At eventide 'tis light."

'So I think it will be evening,
When comes the call for me ;
And I am sure it will be soon,
For I do so long to see,
And I am always watching
Till the good Shepherd come :
When I shall see Him as He is,
In His bright, blessed home.

WOOD ANEMONE—PHEASANT'S EYE.

'The flowers which sprang, as ancient fables tell,
When 'neath the wild boar's tusk Adonis fell;
The youth beloved of Venus, from whose eyes
Poured crystal tears, like raindrops from the skies.'



BEAUTIFUL as are our woodlands in the early days of spring—when 'the rathe primrose,' as Milton calls it, blooms on the sheltered bank, and the fragile stitchwort bends 'neath every passing breeze—when the hyacinth raises its spike of pendent azure bells, and the air is softly scented with the delicate perfume of those 'sweet tenants of the shade,' the lurking purple violets, which

'Gleam like amethysts in the dewy grass,'—there blossoms not a fairer flower than our beautiful wood anemone—*Anemone nemorosa*,—that droops its modest head in such abundance, alike in wood and sheltered valley.

It is the windflower of our old poets,—'l'herbe au vent,' or *wind herb*, of the French. The English name is taken from the Greek word *anemos*, or *wind*, which was given by the ancients,—*why*, I am unable to tell you, unless it be that its delicate petals, so soon ruffled by the spring winds, are oft first found quivering in the fierce breezes of March.

A poet has spoken of

'The coy anemone that ne'er uncloses
Her lips until they're blown on by the wind.'

But I am more disposed to think it is to the warmth and brightness of the genial sunshine that the 'coy anemone' chooses to 'unclose her lips;' for, when he pours his radiant beams with fullest light and vigour on the earth,

'Then thickly strewn in woodland bowers,
Anemones their stars unfold.'

What, my dear little friends, can be more exquisite

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than these fair, timid-looking, quivering blossoms, that nod and tremble amongst the grass, raising their slender stems, with graceful drooping heads, amidst their triplé



WOOD ANEMONE—*Anemone nemorosa*.

circlet of dark, smooth, beautifully-cut leaves ! The flower is white and star-shaped. delicately pencilled with purple

lines; the veins of the green leaves are tinged with crimson; and thus we see even this lowly blossom the divine hand has streaked with loveliness and beauty.

Though continuing to bloom in rapid and plentiful succession, it is frail when gathered, and dies quickly. Thus we are told

* Its beauty but awhile remains,
For those light-hanging leaves, infirmly placed,
The winds, that blow on all things, quickly blast.*

There are various legends attached to the anemone. Some poets have told us it owes its origin to Flora, the goddess of flowers and gardens, the privileged enjoyer of perpetual youth, who, jealous of the exquisite beauty of a Grecian nymph, changed her into this blossom. But the fable most commonly received is that connecting it with the death of Adonis, who was killed whilst hunting, and over whom Venus shed many tears,—each tear that fell to the ground springing up a beautiful anemone.

Now, my little friends may not *all* know that the ancient Greeks and Romans held a mythology, which is simply a collection of legends and fables, of course all fictitious, yet differing from fiction, because once believed to be an account of events that had actually taken place. Gods and goddesses were supposed to have presided over these events, and temples were raised to their memories, in which festivals were held that often lasted for days and weeks. Venus was honoured as the goddess of love and beauty, the mistress of the graces, and queen of laughter. Adonis was her beloved favourite. He was passionately fond of hunting, and so bold and daring in the chase, that Venus, fearful lest in thus exposing himself to danger, he might one day be slain, forbade him to hunt wild beasts; but alas! Adonis, over-confident in himself, heeded not the injunction, and received a mortal injury from a wild boar. Then we are told the plentiful tears of Venus gave birth to the wood anemone; and it is further said that the pheasant's eye, with its deep red petals, which I think must be as familiar to you all

as is the wood anemone, sprang from the drops of blood that fell from the wound of the unfortunate youth, and crimsoned the earth.

As the 'flaunting red poppy,' and 'little weather-prophet pimpernel,' are the only wild flowers that can



PHEASANT'S EYE—*Adonis autumnalis*.

boast so pure and bright a scarlet hue, so the pheasant's eye—*Adonis autumnalis*—possesses a rich crimson tint peculiarly its own, and for which it is often honoured by a place in our garden borders.

As a wildling it is not common; but extremely beautiful are its deep-coloured, buttercup-shaped blossoms, with

their handsome centre, and green leaves so cleft into segments, and which may occasionally be found adorning our corn-fields in the sunny month of July. An old botanist tells us it was sold by the herb-women in the London markets under the name of Rose-a-rubie; and we often hear it named Flos-Adonis, and Adonis flower. In remembrance of the legend—I have just told you, it is to this day familiarly called by the French ‘gouttes de sang,’—*drops of blood*. I dare say you will now seldom see this flower without thinking of the sad death of poor Adonis; or pluck the beauteous wood anemone without being reminded of the despairing tears of Venus, the mother of love, and queen of beauty.

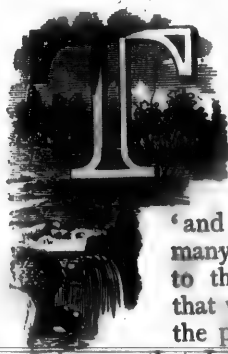
L. P.

BESSIE AND ISABEL;

OR,

PRIDE, COMES BEFORE A FALL.

CHAPTER III.—THE EXAMINATIONS.



HE long hoped-for, long dreaded midsummer examinations came at last, and the glorious vista of the holidays lay beyond.

‘I have done my best to prepare for to-day, mamma,’ said Bessie Gordon in the morning, ‘and still I fear I shall break down in many things. It makes me quite nervous to think of all the papas and mammas that will be listening. When I go to play the piano, I think my hands will tremble,

so that I shall make many blunders. Perhaps I shall not get one prize; but, indeed, I’m almost more anxious about Harriet than myself. How pleasant it

will be if she gets the prize for Scripture, as I think she has a good chance, for her interest in the Sunday-school lessons has led her to study the Bible a great deal !

'I shall be very glad to hear of Harriet's success,' said Mrs. Gordon. 'But Bessie, dear, you must try to conquer this nervousness. I would not for the world have you to be forward ; but neither do I like to see you so diffident. There is not a better way of acquiring a modest confidence than by following the apostle's injunction, "to do everything to the glory of God." The desire to please Him makes us forget, in some measure, the presence of others, and so we think less of their praise or blame. Remember, my love, that the Lord accepts even the efforts of a little girl to say her lessons well for His sake.'

Bessie soon came down, dressed in a neat white muslin frock ; and, as the day was showery, she had a large cloak covering it over. Her mamma went too, and so did Amy ; for the child had got her wish of being well enough to witness the examinations.

Isabel had awoke in high spirits that morning. 'You must mind to dress me with great care to-day, Fanny,' she said in a commanding tone to the maid. 'I want everybody to say that I was the best dressed young lady in the room. I expect to receive several prizes ; and I am very glad ; it's so pleasant to be thought clever ; besides, I wish aunt to see that, when I take pains, I can do far better than Bessie Gordon. How disappointed Bessie will be, when she sees me carrying off the very premiums she has been striving for ! That will be the best part of the triumph ; for I have been out with her this long time,—only of course we must speak sometimes.'

'Miss Bessie is a nice gentle-spoken young lady,' said the maid ; 'and I'm sure she wouldn't wish to spite anybody.'

Isabel was no favourite with any of the servants ; she treated them with pride, and gave them an immense deal of trouble. In the latter, Frank had been equally bad ; but then he was so pleasant and good-natured, that they

were ready to make every excuse for him. Isabel was confident of success; and, indeed, for a girl like her she had taken rare pains to ensure it. She really was more clever than Bessie, and had superior advantages during the earlier part of her education; but, owing to her idle habits, and her cousin's diligent ones, she did not know half so much. She now trusted a good deal to Bessie's nervous timidity about answering at a general examination, whereas she knew that the publicity would act as a stimulus to her own faculties.

As Miss Lawson was confined to her room with a bad cold, she could not be present. She desired, however, that Isabel should see her before leaving the house.

'My dear child, what play-actress costume is this you have on?' she exclaimed, as the little lady flounced in all full of airs and graces. 'It is ridiculous, Isabel; why did you not consult me about your dress?'

'Indeed, aunt, I thought you were too ill to be troubled about such things,' replied Isabel. 'I think this dress is very pretty. I took a fancy to it myself in a shop window, and I coaxed papa to let me buy it; and when it was sent home, he said he supposed it was all right. I'm sure I don't want to be a dowd.'

'No, Isabel dear, I'd be sorry to see you looking dowdy; but that dress is wholly unfit for a little girl at a school examination. Even if you were twenty years of age, I would not wish to see you wear anything so showy; and all this array of ornament, too, is in very bad taste. There is to be no exhibition of dress to-day, as far as I understand; so I must insist on your going back to your toilet, and I trust you will show good sense in the changes you make. You have plenty of nice dresses, and I leave you to a second choice.'

We are sorry to tell that poor silly Isabel now lost her temper. We shall not repeat all the naughty self-willed things she said; but her sensible aunt was firm, and the end of the contest was, that she had to go back to change her dress. Miss Lawson was grieved on

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seeing so plainly that as yet she had failed to produce any reformation in her niece. She was content, however, to work and pray on, hoping that in God's good time her efforts would be blessed.

In a rage Isabel tore off the gaudy dress, and replaced it with a richly worked muslin. Some of the ornaments she put away, but others she kept, and among them was that costly necklace which she had worn at her own party. Before her aunt's coming, the child had been improperly allowed to make use of many articles of jewellery which had belonged to her mother, and this had fostered her self-importance, and given rise to much vain boasting. On appearing before her aunt again, this necklace, and also a glittering brooch, were artfully concealed.

'Oh dear! to what an hour I've been kept,' she exclaimed on looking at the clock. 'The examinations will have begun long before I get to school.'

Mr. Lawson now came to the door to say, that as Isabel was so late, the gig which bore her to school could not go the whole way this morning, for he had arranged that it should meet a friend of his at the railway by eleven o'clock. She would have only a short way to walk. In increased vexation, the young lady drove off without saying a word to anybody.

Meantime the school had assembled; the anxious young candidates were all in their places, and parents were looking on with deep interest. The examinations were to last for two days. Bessie felt herself trembling all over as the first question drew near. It was in Roman history, and the two girls next her had missed it.

'Who was taken from the plough to be a dictator?' was the question.

'Cincinnatus,' she replied quickly.

'Tell me what you know of him,' said the teacher, seeing her intelligent look.

Bessie loved history, and she was a special admirer of the noble farmer hero; so, almost forgetting her bash-

fulness, she told of the embassy coming to Cincinnatus in the field; of his parting from his wife, and leaving their land untilled; of his settling everything at Rome, and receiving the nation's applause; and then of his returning to his modest home as humble as before.

The teacher looked greatly pleased; but Bessie's face was as red as a rose, and her eyes were fixed on the ground. However, her success raised her courage, and she scarcely dreaded the next question at all. She passed through her geography and some other lessons with equal credit. Music was not to come off till to-morrow.

'But where was Isabel?' she asked herself for the sixth or seventh time. The day was advancing, yet she did not come. Something unusual must have happened. The girls whispered their surprise, for all knew that Isabel had set her heart on getting prizes this time. Two o'clock, three o'clock struck, and still the dainty little figure did not appear. The school separated; Mrs. Gordon and Amy went home, while Bessie called at the Lawsons' to learn the cause of her cousin's absence.

'Isabel not at school!' repeated Miss Lawson in a fright. 'She left this some time before eleven. What can have become of her?'

The driver was called up, and he declared that he had set the young lady down quite safe, and that he knew nothing more of her. Miss Lawson was too ill to go out for a search; her brother and Frank were not at home; so she was puzzled what to do. As she and Bessie were talking over the matter, a servant came upstairs to say that there was a strange young girl down-stairs asking to see the mistress. Before introducing this person to our readers, we shall go back to Isabel, and let them see, with their own eyes, what was her mishap, and how it came about.

When the gig stopped, the sun was shining brightly, but there were some dark clouds in the sky, which showed that a shower was not far off.

'Won't you take this cloak and hood, miss?' said the man.

'No, they are too heavy,' replied Isabel. 'I'll be sure to get to school without rain.'

She did not like to have her pretty dress quite covered. As she went along, she drew her necklace outside, so that every passer-by might admire it. In a few minutes the sun was obscured; heavy drops of rain began to patter; and Isabel put up her parasol and ran on. The rain fell faster, however; she looked around for shelter, but there was none on the open road. Oh, how she regretted the good things that had been provided for her! In an adjoining field, there was a small ruin, under whose broken arch she might find protection. But, alas! there was no regular stile to this field, and the only entrance was steep and slippery. Yet where else could she go? The rain was now in torrents, and in a little while her dress would be drenched. So, bravely enough, she started off down the slope. It was a failure: her foot slipped, and she fell. Her knee struck against a sharp stone, and the pain was so great that she fainted. After she had lain there about five minutes, a woman coming through the field saw her; for she was not visible from the road.

'Poor little thing,' said the stranger to herself, 'I must pick her up and try to bring her round.'

She took Isabel in her arms; and as the brief, heavy shower was now almost over, she sat down on a bank, and in a rough sort of way tried to restore the child. This was not a good woman, though she had some pity in her heart; and, when she caught sight of the handsome brooch and necklace, the temptation to steal them was very strong. She had never been taught what was right; she was very poor; and the glorious riches of faith in Christ were unknown to her soul. She looked around to see that nobody was watching; then slipped off the ornaments, and laid Isabel, who was just beginning to recover, on the ground again. In a few moments she was out of sight.

Isabel soon became quite conscious; she was aware

that somebody had been with her, and now she was surprised to find herself alone. She rose up; but could hardly walk a step with the pain and stiffness in her knee. The school was nearly a quarter of a mile off; yet, even if she could walk, how would it be possible to get up that steep bank? and besides, what business had she in school now? She began to cry dolefully; but, oh! how was her woe increased when she suddenly missed her treasured trinkets! She guessed at once what had become of them. This loss caused her far more distress than the accident. She burst into a wilder fit of weeping, clasped her hands, and stamped and screamed, and then threw herself on the ground again, sobbing and lamenting. Some passers-by, hearing her cries, offered their assistance; but on seeing that they were poor people, she thought they might be thieves too, and refused all aid in the most decided manner.

At last she remembered that just beyond this field there was a cottage in which lived good, honest people. Her aunt had often visited them; but Isabel had been too proud to go in, and had always made some excuse for remaining outside. Now, in her necessity, she resolved to crawl there as best she could. She had to go the length of the field, and to get out by an easy stile on another road; and then the cottage was before her. The good woman was just putting out her clothes to bleach, as Isabel came limping up.

'Can it be Miss Isabel Lawson?' she exclaimed, in surprise. 'Why, my poor dear young lady, what has happened to you? Come in and sit down.'

Isabel suffered herself to be led in, and seated on a stool by the fire. She then told of her fall, and of the robbery; and the woman expressed her sympathy and indignation in warm terms.

'But don't fret, miss,' she continued; 'perhaps the rogue will be found when your papa makes a fuss about the matter. Ay, I think I know that one; she's the same, I'll be bound, as stole the young turkeys out of

Farmer Smith's yard the other night. I hope she won't be left to trouble the neighbourhood long. But now, I must get some whisky to wash your knee, miss, for I see it's badly cut; and then, maybe you'd like to lie down on the bed awhile, you look so tired.' As soon as the knee was nicely washed and plastered up, Isabel felt glad to lie down on the clean, but shabby bed.

'How shall I let my aunt know that I am here?' she asked.

'Well, you see, miss,' said the woman, 'I've got nobody here just now to send over to your aunt. My daughter is out doing jobs for a lady, and she won't be in till past three o'clock; but, of course, the minute she comes in, I'll make her go. I thought, miss, that the gig might be sent for you, and that, perhaps, if I watched, I'd be able to run across, and stop it in time.'

'No,' replied Isabel; 'it's always sent with me in the morning; but they don't send it for me unless the day is wet. I always walk home with some schoolfellows who live nearly beside us.'

The woman now returned to her work, and Isabel lay still, mourning over her disabled limb, her defeated ambition, and her lost jewellery. At length she fell asleep. She dreamt that she was dying; that her fall had been down a great precipice; and that she had been carried home in dreadful pain. She thought that Frank stood in the room, crying bitterly; that she heard the doctor whispering to her papa that he could do nothing for her; and that her aunt sat by her side with a Bible in her hand, speaking gently of the love of Christ, and trying to lead her to hope in Him. But she felt very wretched; her aunt's words gave her no comfort; and she trembled at the idea of going into the presence of God. She remembered all her vanity and ill-temper, and her unkind wish to mortify Bessie; and she feared she could not be forgiven. Oh, how she longed to live, that she might prove her repentance, by being a better girl for the future!

In the midst of this distress of mind she awoke, and to her great joy found it was only a dream. But a serious impression remained, and she began to think, 'What if it had been in earnest?' For the first time in her life she admitted candidly that she was not a good child, and that Bessie and Amy Gordon were far before her in that respect. She tried to excuse herself, by reflecting that she had no mamma to look after her; but still she knew that she might have done much better. She felt sorry for her ill-natured, jealous behaviour towards Bessie, and resolved to make friends with her again as soon as possible. She considered the circumstances that had led to her accident, and saw how entirely the fault lay with herself. A foolish vanity had hindered her from taking the muffling, which would have enabled her to brave the shower, and run on straight to school. Vanity, too, had caused her to wear her necklace, so that it at once caught the eye of the thief. And to go farther back, vanity was at the very root of the matter; for it was by dressing so extravagantly at first, and then disputing about a change, that she kept herself too late for the gig to go the whole way with her as usual. Oh that she had followed her aunt's advice more! She thought of all the trouble this kind-hearted Christian woman had taken for her good, and how little she was profited by it. She had tried to hate Aunt Lawson, but could not; though a firm person, there was something so sweet and loving about her, that it was impossible. Isabel now felt a spirit of love to her aunt rise up in her heart, and she determined to attend to her teachings a great deal more for the future, and, above all, to listen to what she said about holy things. She knew that she had neglected her Bible, that prayer had been a mere form with her, the Sunday school a bore, and that God was not in all her thoughts. She felt humbled and reproved; her sin and folly lay before her eyes, and very ugly they looked. She must try to do better; she must begin at once.

At this moment, the daughter of the woman of the cottage came in; and after very few minutes' delay, she was sent off to Miss Lawson.

We have now brought our young readers up to the time when the strange girl was announced, as Miss Lawson and Bessie sat talking. On hearing that the message concerned her niece, Miss Lawson desired that the young woman should be brought to her room. She knew her at once, having often seen her at the cottage. The story of Isabel's misfortunes was soon told. Miss Lawson ordered the carriage to be got ready instantly, and Bessie offered to go in it, that her cousin might not have to return alone. The kind aunt was glad of this, as she knew Bessie would take every care of Isabel. She thanked the girl very much for having come to her, and desired her to tell her mother she would go and see her as soon as she was able.

It was not long before the carriage drove up to the cottage, and Bessie Gordon ran in.

'Oh, Bessie, dear cousin Bessie! is it really you? I'm so delighted to see you!' cried Isabel, as she threw her arms round the little girl and kissed her.

Bessie cordially returned the embrace.

'I've come to take you home,' she said. 'The carriage is waiting. I'm so sorry you've been hurt; but I hope it won't last long.'

When Isabel tried to walk, she found that it was not only her knee which had been hurt, but that her ankle also had got some kind of twist. She had to be carried out by the coachman.

'Good-bye, Mrs. Clarke,' she said to the woman; 'I am much obliged for your kindness to me.'

As they drove along, Isabel told Bessie how much she had been in fault; and she asked forgiveness for all the annoyance she had lately given her. This was gladly granted.

When Isabel got home, a doctor was sent for. He said she should be kept quiet for a week or so, as the ankle was sprained, and the knee very much cut.

'Come over to-morrow evening, and tell me all about the examinations,' she whispered to her cousin as they parted.

Bessie came accordingly, bearing certain pretty-looking books under her arm.

'Oh, so you *have* got premiums then !' said Isabel.

'Yes, I've got three, and one is for music, notwithstanding all my nervousness about it. Mamma is so pleased.'

'You deserve them well, Bessie,' said her cousin,— 'better than I should have done. You studied hard, and never thought of vexing anybody else. At Christmas, perhaps, I may do something. But what of Harriet?'

'Oh, she got the first prize for Scripture ! Everybody was glad ; she is such a good little girl.'

Bessie did not tell that Harriet laid her success very much on the friendly help she received from her every Saturday evening. The cousins had a long chat, for there was a great deal of news to be told.

Should any of our readers be tempted to indulge in pride and vanity, and turn a deaf ear to instruction, they will do well to take warning from the severe lesson which Isabel Lawson received. Value the advice of friends who are praying and labouring for your good ; and never be weary of seeking to do the right thing, however strong the temptation to do wrong may be. Begin early, for bad habits grow fast and strong ; and pray to the Lord Almighty that His Holy Spirit may guide you into the paths of righteousness and of peace, through Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour.

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